

# A CAMERONIAN APOSTLE.

*H. M. B. REID, B.D.*

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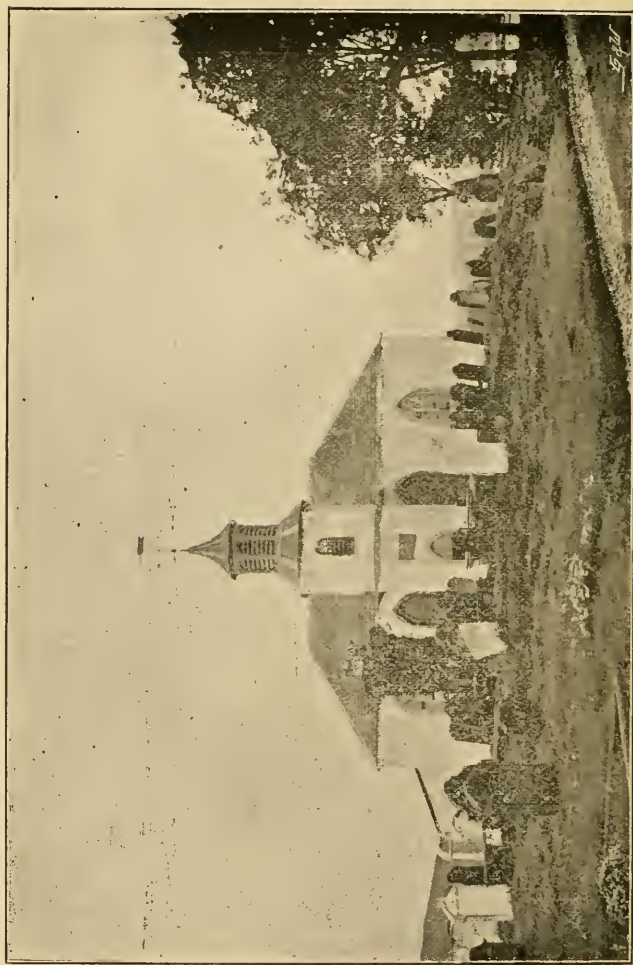




## A Cameronian Apostle







BALMAGHIE CHURCH SHOWING REMAINS OF MACMILLAN'S CHURCH.

# A Cameronian Apostle

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF

✓  
John Macmillan of Balmaghie

BY THE

✓  
REV. H. M. B. REID, B.D.,

BALMAGHIE

---

WITH TEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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ALEXANDER GARDNER,

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1896



## P R E F A C E .

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THE Author of this book is encouraged by the friendly reception given to his brief notices of Macmillan in the *Kirk above Dee Water*, to hope that this more lengthy account of that remarkable man may interest some. He has tried, as far as possible, to make the work interesting to the general reader, and, at the same time, strictly accurate and faithful as a record of facts.

The controversy, which cost Macmillan his place and emoluments as a parish minister, is not dead, or even sleeping. Recent movements in ecclesiastical circles prove that "spiritual independence" is still a living principle in many earnest minds.

The author wishes to give cordial acknowledgments to the following kind friends (among many others) who have generously and unselfishly helped him in his self-imposed task:—Rev. J. H. Thomson, Hightae; Rev. M. Hutchison, New Cumnock; Rev. George Laurie, Castle Douglas; Rev. John Torrance, Glasgow; Rev. James Kennedy, New College, Edinburgh; William Macmath, Esq., F.S.A., Edinburgh; James M'Kerrow, Esq., Boreland of Southwick; Adam Rae, Esq., Castle Douglas; J. H. Maxwell, Esq., of the *Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser*; James Barbour, Esq., F.S.A., Dumfries; Rev. John Reid, of Minnigaff; Rev. Walter W. Coats, B.D., of Girthon; Dr. Goold, Edinburgh; Thomas Binnie, Esq., Glasgow; Rev. T. Colvin,

of Kirkmabreck ; and last, not least, Dr. John Grieve, a great-great-grandson of Macmillan, who constantly aided the author's researches.

A list of books and pamphlets, as exhaustive as possible, is subjoined.

PALMAGHIE MANSE,  
*April, 1896.*



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## WORKS CONSULTED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS BOOK.

### PAMPHLETS ON THE CONTROVERSY :—

A True Narrative of the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright : 1704. [By Macmillan himself. Reprinted in Appendix.]

The Pamphlet entitled A True Narrative Examined and Found False : 1705. [By Cameron of Kirkcudbright. Contains also the Libel and Grounds of Sentence.]

Answers to a Paper of Grievances : 1705. [Chiefly by Cameron and Ewart. Contains also a copy of Macmillan's "Grievances."]

An Account of the Deposition of Mr. John McMillan : 1706.

The Examination of the True Narrative Tryed and Found False : 1706. [By Macmillan.]

The Ravished Maid of the Wilderness : 1708.

Letter to a Friend : *n. d.*

Reply to the Letter to a Friend : 1710.

Reflections on the Reply : *n. d.* [By Robert Hamilton.]

The Friendly Conference ; or, a Discourse between a Country Man and his Nephew, who having fallen off from Hearing, hath for some time been a follower of Mr. McMillan : [1711 ?]

A Short Survey of a Pamphlet, entituled, A Friendly Conference : 1712.

The Survey Breiflie Examined : *n. d.*

The Examiner of the Survey : *n. d.*

- A Letter from a Friend to Mr. John Mackmillan: 1709. [By Lining and Webster.]
- The Beam pulled out of the Hypocrite's Eye: *n. d.* [This is a reply to the preceding.]
- A Modest Reply to a Pamphlet, intituled, A Letter from a Friend: 1710? [By Hugh Clark. Wodrow (*Anal.*, i. 278), writing in 1710, says:—"The Modest Apology for Macmillan is writt by a club. The Lady C., once a sweet singer, her son, with Dr. Pitcairn, and Arniston, were the composers of it."]

\*The foregoing pamphlets are mostly in the Advocates' Library. Macmillan's *Examination of the True Narrative Tried and Found False*, and the tract entitled *The Examiner of the Survey on the Friendly Conference*, are in the New College Library, Edinburgh.

#### BOOKS BEARING ON THE PERIOD:—

- A Testimony to the Free Grace of God, by Monteith of Borgue: ed. 1841, by Rev. Samuel Smith.
- Modern Sadducism: a True Relation of an Apparition . . .  
 in Ringcroft of Stocking in the Parish of Rerwick . . .  
 in 1695 . . . by Mr. Alexander Telfair, Minister of  
 that Parish. In Nicholson's *Historical and Traditional  
 Tales*, 1843.
- The Twice-Christened Bairn. Also in Nicholson, as above.
- The Presbytery Records of Kirkcudbright, from the year 1700.
- The Records of the Synod of Galloway, from the year 1689.
- The Kirk Session Records of Minnigaff, from the year 1699.
- The Kirk Session Records of Girthon, *anno* 1700.
- A MS. Narrative, by a contemporary, of events in the Parish of Balmaghie in 1701-1713. Copious extracts printed in *Glasgow Herald* of August 16, 18, and 23, 1870.

Minutes of the United Societies, from the year 1693. In the New College Library.

Scot's *Fasti*, ed. 1867.

Wodrow's *Analecta*, ed. 1842.

Old and New Statistical Accounts.

Fraser (of Brea)! A Treatise of Justifying Faith. Also, Dr. Walker's Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 2nd edit., 1888.

Acts of the General Assembly, 1704 to 1708.

Hill Burton's History of Scotland.

Principal Cunningham's History of the Church of Scotland, ed. 1882.

Murray's Literary History of Galloway : 1822.

Rae's History of the Late Rebellion : 1718.

Patrick Walker's Biographia Presbyteriana.

Adam Gib's Display of the Secession Testimony : 2 vols., 1774.

Nisbet's System of Heraldry : 2 vols., 1816.

Minutes of the War Committee of the Stewartry, 1640-41. Nicholson : 1855.

Hepburn's Humble Pleadings for the Good Old Way : 1713.

An Informatory Vindication of a Poor, Wasted, Misrepresented Remnant of the Suffering, Anti-Popish, Anti-Prelatick, Anti-Erastian, Anti-Sectarian, True Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, united together in a General Correspondence : 1707. [By Renwick and Shields.]

Johnston's Treasury of the Scottish Covenant : 1887.

M'Kerlie's Lands and their Owners in Galloway 1877.

Nicholson's History of Galloway : 2 vols

Testimony-Bearing Exemplified. Paisley : 1791.

A Dismal Account of the Burning of our Solemn League and National Covenant . . . at Linlithgow, May 29, 1661, being the Birthday of Charles 2d. [A broadsheet.]

- The National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant,  
with the Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to  
Duties, as they were renewed at Douglas, July 24, 1712.  
Published 1712. [By Macmillan. An account of the  
"Auchensaugh Renovation."]
- Scots Worthies, 2nd ed., 1781 [with the appendix of "Judg-  
ments upon Persecutors"].
- Reformed Presbyterian Magazine : 1869, 1870.
- Johnston's Place-Names of Scotland : 1892.
- Gibson's Tombstones of the Covenanters.
- Dr. Kerr's Covenants and the Covenanters : 1895.
- Dr. Thomson's Thomas Boston of Ettrick : 1895.
- Binnie's Sketch of the History of the First Reformed Presby-  
terian Congregation : 1888.
- The Kirk above Dee Water : 1895.
- William Wilson's Steps of Defection : August 2, 1721. [MS.  
original in New College, Edinburgh.]
- Observations on a Wolf in a Sheepskin : 1753.
- Scots Magazine : 1753.
- Hutchison's History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church :  
1893.
- Burns' Scottish Communion Plate : 1892.
- Mackenzie's Galloway.
- Chalmers' Caledonia.

# A CAMERONIAN APOSTLE.



## CHAPTER I.

1669-1700.

### SETTING SAIL.

Reasons for present work--Birth at Barncauchlaw, 1669--Glenhead Confession of Faith--Minnigaff Records and Tomb stones--Boyhood and Youth--College Days--Relations to United Societies at College--Reasons for entering the State Church--Divinity Studies--His Scholarship and Piety.

I PROPOSE, in this volume, to give as full an account as the documents within my reach permit, of the life of John Macmillan. Although few, comparatively, know or care much about the subject, there are more reasons than one for undertaking this task.

For one thing, no attempt at a complete life of this remarkable man has, so far as I know, ever been made, if we except the brief sketch by Mr. Thomson of Hightae in the *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*.<sup>\*</sup> This account of Macmillan is characteristically accurate, but it does not go into minute detail. Mr. Thomson's investigations are embodied in the present work, while a considerable mass of additional matter has been

<sup>\*</sup> See the volumes for 1869 and 1870.

obtained. The notices of Macmillan in works on Scottish Church History are very meagre. In Cunningham, for instance, he has hardly more than one short paragraph allotted to him.\* And this contains simply a discreditable piece of gossip. In these circumstances, and considering the renewed interest taken at present in questions of Church government and establishment, there seemed to be some room for a detailed treatment of a career which covers so interesting a period as that embraced between 1690 and 1750.

Again, the personality and position of Macmillan seem worthy of some degree of consideration. He was, undoubtedly, a man of unusual force and determination. He was the first of that group of stalwart Scotsmen, of whom it has been well said :—“The Macmillans, the Fairleys, the Thorburns, the Hendersons, the Rowatts, the Symingtons, the Goolds, were not little men. Most of them were men of stature, men of presence, even corporeally, and all preachers of the gospel and witnesses of the truth. They were men who would have adorned and enriched any Church in the world.”† For many years he fought the battle of the Covenants alone, and he fought it on lines of policy and wisdom. I have tried to indicate his position among the “Suffering Remnant” by calling him “a Cameronian Apostle”; for, during the long period of thirty-six years, he was the sole ordained minister among the scattered congregations of the “Society” people. The name seems not unfitting, and it receives a certain sanction from the authority of Dr. Cunningham, who styles him the “high-priest” of the Societies. Such a designation could only be given to one who held a very important position among his followers. On this ground, therefore, he deserves a memorial.

\* Cunningham's *Ch. Hist.*, ii., 228; *Fasts*, ii., under Balmaghie.

† Rev. J. M'Dermid, 1875.



Further, Macmillan's story is also the record of the development of a most interesting side of Scottish Church life. He may be said, indeed, to have made the history of what, at last, became the Reformed Presbyterian Church. This is so true, that that Church long bore the popular name of the "Macmillanites." And the name of Macmillan is bound up with more than one congregation still existing.\*

It may be added, that as one born and bred in the province of Galloway, in fact, a true "Galloway man," Macmillan has a special interest for the large class of readers who now relish and seek after Galloway lore. Also, the writer of this volume humbly conceives that, as an unworthy successor in the cure of Balmaghie, he has some degree of official function in his present undertaking. At all events, he is laying his stone upon the memorial cairn of one who, whatever his faults may have been, was once the idol of the whole parish, and whose memory is even yet green around and within the parish church.

The received statement as to Macmillan's birth is that it took place at Barncauchlaw, a solitary hill-farm in the parish of Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire, in the year 1669. This was the year in which the "Assertory Act" of Charles II. was passed, declaring the King's "supremacy over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastical": the first Act repealed at the Revolution. The old house of Barncauchlaw is still standing, although it has been much added to. It lies about four miles from Newton-Stewart, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles further on is the tall column which commemorates the learning and genius of Murray. The visitor reaches the little steading by a steep pathway up the hillside, and on arriving at the summit he finds himself confronting a vast expanse of mountain scenery. Hill after hill rolls away

\* *e.g.*, Macmillan Church, Castle-Douglas; Great Hamilton Street Church, Glasgow.

toward the horizon. The prospect on a summer day is full of a peaceful charm. In the dead of winter it is distinctly sublime, but at the same time somewhat appalling. In the winter of 1895, these mountainous wilds were wrapped for weeks in snow. An idea of the scene may be gathered from the homely fact, that 4000 sheep encamped close to the farmhouse, driven down from their high pasture-lands by the tremendous drifts. Sheep-farming has been the industry pursued all around from time immemorial. The farmer often does not know the exact acreage of these wild lands, or even the exact number of his sheep. Barncauchlaw is only one among many lonely steadings dotting the landscape. In most of these there have been, or are, families of the name of Macmillan.\* There are Macmillans at Palgown and Glenhead still, and there used to be Macmillans in Dallash. Curiously enough, there is no recoverable tradition that there were Macmillans in Barncauchlaw, where the birth of the Reformed Presbyterian Father is generally located.

Entering the farm kitchen, one sees that here is the old interior, very little altered in 200 years. The wide ingle-neuk still remains, though the great oaken beam overhead was removed some years ago. Within this warm corner the little fellow doubtless sat at evening time, when his father conducted the unfailing worship. In another part of the old house a small chamber may be seen, where possibly he first saw the light. From the little narrow window there is a glorious view of the hills. Till quite lately, there were Cameronians living here, and the lamented Mr. Goold of Newton-Stewart paid regular pastoral visits. Now, the inmates wend their way to the parish church of Minnigaff.

\* Nicholson (*Book of the War Committee*, p. 74,) says :—" . . . at one time M'Millan was the predominant name in nearly all the upper district of the Stewartry." The name is common in Newton-Stewart among families and on public buildings, such as the Macmillan Hall.

There is a remarkable lack of authorities, near the time, for the usual account of Macmillan's birth. The first time the statement appears in print, so far as I can find, is in the *Scots Magazine* of 1753, the year of Macmillan's death. Apparently it has been faithfully copied by succeeding writers, such as J. H. Thomson and Mr. Hutchison. While accepting the usual date and place, I think it right to mention that, as to the place, there is evidence of a different impression among Macmillan's own contemporaries. In the preface to the Presbytery's *Examination*, printed in 1705, the following curious passage occurs :—

“When this man was under trials before the Presbytery, though the brethren knew that since he had been a boy he was a separatist, till that some years preceding that time, he broke off therefrom, and attended on the public ordinances; yet they knew not that he had ever been so bigot a separatist as indeed he was; the brother, in whose parish he was born, and lived when a separatist, who is now again a member of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, having been then a member of the Presbytery of Wigtown, by the annexing of his parish thereto. . . .”

The statement here is valuable, coming so near the actual time. It fixes the place of birth in some parish which had been recently re-annexed to the Kirkcudbright Presbytery. In the Records of that Presbytery, which begin in 1700, it is minuted on March 18, 1701, that *Kells* had been re-annexed. Macmillan was licensed to preach on November 26, 1700, when, of course, the minister of Kells was not a member of the Presbytery. The impression among the members was, that he had been born and brought up in Kells within the knowledge of Andrew Ewart, who was ordained there in 1692 at the age of 31.\* At that date, if born in 1669, Macmillan would be 23 years old, and

\* Fasti, ii.: Synod Records.

could scarcely be said to have been a "boy." At his license he would be 31 years old.

Kells is the next parish to Minnigaff, and possibly the passage above quoted is reconcilable with the Barncauchlaw tradition, if we suppose that Macmillan, though born in Minnigaff, had early removed to Kells and been employed there on some farm. We may conjecture that at the Revolution he "broke off" and attended Kells church, so that he came within the intimate knowledge of Mr. Ewart.

The minute of Presbytery, August 20, 1700, when his trials for license began, says :—

"Mr. John Macmillan, . . . having lived in the bounds from his nativity, except the time of his being at the college, . . . being well known and of good report among the brethren and in the bounds . . ."

At this date, Kells does not appear in the sederunts ; but "the bounds" may refer to the Synod of Galloway's bounds, or it may be a natural slip, as Kells had formerly been in the Presbytery's bounds. But Minnigaff never was.

On the whole, these passages seem to suggest, at the least, that Macmillan had spent his boyhood and early years in the parish of Kells, although perhaps born in the neighbouring parish, Minnigaff.\*

In visiting the farm of Glenhead, in Minnigaff, I found a very old copy of the Confession of Faith in the possession of the tenant, Mr. John Macmillan.† It is probably the original print. On a fly-leaf are written several names, by way of family

\* This is Mr. Thomson of Hightae's view, *Ref. Presby. Mag.*, 1869, p. 306.

† See, for a genial reference to this gentleman, Mr. Crockett's characteristic preface to *Men of the Moss-hags*, 1895.

register, subscribed by Alexander Macmillan, 27th December, 1732. I copy these names, so far as legible :—

1. [Part torn or burned] - born 1664.
2. John M'Millan, - - „ 1682.
3. James M'Millan, - - „ 1692.
4. Mary M'Millan, - - „ 1715.

On another leaf is a note, as follows :—

“ James M'Millan aught this book,  
God give him grace thereon to look ;

And I grant it may be restored to my son John M'Millan at my death ; as  
witnesseth my hand the 12 of February, 1732.

“ JAMES M'MILLAN.”

If the *John* of this volume was the future minister, his birth took place in 1682 ; and at license in 1700, he would be only eighteen years old. He might well have been born at Barn-cauchlaw still, since it is but a dozen miles away from Glenhead. If it be urged that eighteen is an age too youthful for license, we have only to quote the following remarkable figures from the *Scots Worthies*, taken at random :—

JOHN WELSH, born 1570, minister at Selkirk, Kirkcudbright, and lastly at Ayr, in 1590 : aged 20.

JAMES MITCHELL, born 1621, A.M. at 18.

ANDREW GRAY, born 1634, licensed at 19.

HUGH BINNING, became Professor of Philosophy in Glasgow University at 19.

HUGH M'KAIL, born 1640, licensed when about 20.

To which may be added—

THOMAS BOSTON, born 1676 ; A.M. in 1694, at 18.\*

Now-a-days, license to preach is not granted till the age of 21. Principal Tulloch, as Mrs. Oliphant relates, was kept back because he was not of age. “ Why was I not born two months

\* Dr. Andrew Thomson's *Thomas Boston of Ettrick*, p. 36.

sooner?"\* he writes, in a letter to his future wife, when he had passed his "trials for license," but had got no license after all. But in the seventeenth century, mere striplings were employed as domestic "chaplains," and were frequently admitted to the position of probationers. Macmillan himself, when he applied for license, was described as "chaplain to the Laird of Broughton."† Thomas Boston was in a similar position at Kennet before he had reached the age of twenty. ‡

A careful examination of the Minnigaff Kirk-Session Records discloses no relevant fact, unless it be deemed such that a "*John M'Millan in Craigencallie*" was a member of the Kirk-Session in 1699. A still more searching inspection of the silent memorials in Minnigaff churchyard, in which the present able and scholarly minister, Mr. John Reid, gave valuable help, shows that there is absolutely no mention of Barncauchlaw or Glenhead. By common tradition, the family stones are two in number, but the older does not go back further than 1747, when it records the death in that year of "*Martin M'Millan in Kirkland,*" aged 50; of Anthony, who died in 1760; and of Anthony's father, James, who died in 1763, aged 71. This last was therefore born in 1692, and is perhaps the "James M'Millan" of the Glenhead Confession of Faith. The stone is said to be "*erected by Patrick M'Millan in Claycroft,*" and by "*James M'Millan and Anthony his son in Caldons, and William M'Millan and Patrick his son in Woodland, and William M'Millan, son to the said Martin.*" Here, as was remarked already, is no word of Glenhead, but Caldons is near that farm, and families shift from place to place. The only thing certain is, that the parish was full of Macmillans. The universal belief

\* Mrs. Oliphant's *Life of Principal Tulloch*, p. 26.

† Presby. Rec., Aug. 20, 1700.

‡ Dr. Thomson's *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 39.

is, that these were the original stock. The second and modern stone commemorates "Basil M'Millan, mercht. in Newton Stewart," who died in 1843, aged 72, and was the munificent donor of the fine Macmillan Hall. On the older stone is massed a remarkable body of symbols. At the top is something very like a mitre. Then there are the cross-bones, skull, hour-glass with wings, coffin, and cherub, along with floral carvings. It is worthy of note, that John Macmillan, the subject of our inquiry, had a brother named James,\* to whom Wodrow refers as having on one occasion approached the Presbytery in a vain attempt to effect an accommodation.† To conclude these remarks, which are placed here in the faint hope that some further light may yet be thrown on the question of the birthplace, Nisbet in his *Heraldry* states that Andrew Macmillan of Arndarroch, in the barony of Earlston, Dalry, appears in a writ dating 1569; and Nicholson‡ adds that our John Macmillan was descended from the same family. Then, in 1587, there was a "John M'Mollan" in Brockloch, Carsphairn. Nicholson also mentions "William M'Millan of *Caldow*, in Balmaclellan," as a sufferer in the pre-latic times. Is *Caldow* an error for *Caldons*? The subject must be left in this doubtful state, but it is at least clear that Macmillan belonged to no mean family, and yeoman as he was, had very ancient blood in his veins.

What has already been quoted from contemporary documents reveals the interesting fact, that Macmillan's boyhood was spent among the strictest party of the Covenanters. It may be assumed, that his parents were members of the United Societies formed in 1681. Their special principles, according to Mr. Hutchison, were "separation from all other Presbyterians who accepted the Indulgences, or in any way held communion with the Indulged, or ceased to be open witnesses; and separation

\* See p. 15.

† *Analecta*, i. 290.

‡ *War Committee*, p. 74, note.



from the State, as expressed in the Sanquhar Declaration. Along with this, adhesion to the doctrinal standards of the Church, and to the whole attainments of the Second Reformation, was required." \* The terms of communion were extremely strict. No one was received, or continued in fellowship, who "paid cess, locality, or militia-money to the civil authorities, or stipend to the curates or indulged clergy." † The taking of any oath or bond to the Government was forbidden. The members might not appear in any law-court, or in short have any dealings, either by themselves or by their agents, with the existing powers in Church and State.

Brought up as he was from childhood in these principles, we can understand how strong a hold they must have taken on Macmillan's mind and heart. His earliest experience must have been that of attending the hill-meetings, at which the Covenanters assembled for worship. He must have listened continually to the keen discussions and arguments regarding the Church, in which they delighted. And sterner aspects were not wanting. The Sanquhar Declaration was swiftly followed by a "Proclamation against Field Conventicles," denouncing death and confiscation of goods against the preachers. It was provided, also, that any person refusing to disown Renwick's subsequent Declaration upon oath, might be immediately put to death. Later, orders were given to "turn out all the wives and children" of forfeited Covenanters, if it should appear that they had held any communication with their husbands or parents. It became a crime, not only to attend such assemblies, as those of the Society people, but also to have any human intercourse with those who did so. What was called *intercommuning*, a sort of Scottish boycotting, laid its victims under a ban, and made them hunted outcasts. The darkest hour, as is well known,

\* *History*, p. 57.

† *Ibid.*



came in 1685, a date graven on many tombstones in the south of Scotland. At this time, Macmillan may have been a lad of sixteen, engaged in pastoral work on a sheep-farm in Kells or Minnigaff. He was old enough to be deeply impressed with the fate which overtook more than one poor peasant in the Stewartry. He must have heard, how Adam M'Quhan, "sick of a fever," was "taken out of his bed and carried to Newtown of Galloway (Newton-Stewart), and the next day most cruelly and unjustly shot to death . . . for his adherence to Scotland's Reformation, Covenants, National and Solemn League." \* He must have known the story of the first outbreak of hostilities, between the Scottish Covenanters and the Government, at Dalry in 1666. He probably knew that parish thoroughly, since his own family had sprung from Arndarroch, in the barony of Earlstoun.† And so, he had perhaps seen the "Whig Hole" at Altrye, where many Covenanters took refuge. His relation, William Macmillan of Caldow in Balmaclellan, a Covenanting preacher, had been twice arrested and imprisoned. The whole circumstances of his boyhood and youth tended to deepen his sentiment in favour of the sufferers. The very blood in his veins was Covenanting blood.

No wonder that, "since he had been a boy, he was a separatist." The contrast between the ragged footsore preacher of the "Hill Folks," and the parish minister who had accepted the Indulgence and enjoyed manse, glebe, and pension, must have appealed to any enthusiastic youth. Still more, the spectacle of Christian men and women being hunted to church under penalties, to endure the ministrations of a hated "Curate" like Peter Peirson of Carsphairn, would excite in his heart a hot indignation.

\* See tombstone in Kells Churchyard : Gibson's *Inscriptions*, p. 276.

† Nisbet's *Heraldry : War Committee*, p. 75, note.

Macmillan, no doubt, received the usual education of boys of his degree. We shall have reason, later on, to remark that he had probably suffered from the stormy times in which he spent his school-days, as well as the great distances in these extensive parishes. Schools, also, had largely fallen into decay before the Revolution. To the end of his life, he shewed weakness in spelling and grammatical niceties; but these were common features among the highest classes of the day. The long interval during which (if we accept 1669 as the year of his birth), he was engaged in secular work, probably tending sheep on some desolate hill-farm, must already have affected his chances of rapid progress when he at length went up to Edinburgh University in 1695.

The Matriculation Register under that year shews his signature, spelled as in the Glenhead Confession—

John M'millan.

Four years before, Thomas Boston had written his name in the same book. But he came almost fresh from Duns Grammar School, a lad of fifteen. Indeed, he would have entered in 1689, but for want of the necessary funds.\* Macmillan on the contrary, according to the received account, was twenty-six years old when he signed his name and paid his first fee. In his case, too, it may be that want of money had delayed his entrance. But I rather incline to think, that the Revolution was the true cause of the appearance of the tall, serious countryman in those halls of learning. While Church affairs were unsettled, and the Societies had to seek training, and even ordination, for their preachers in Holland, it was a practical impossibility for most Scottish youths to secure the needful qualifications. Two or three, like Lining and Boyd, had been sent to Holland and educated at the expense of the Societies.† James Renwick was

\* *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 38, 33.

† *Hutchison*, p. 108.

another such protégé. But Macmillan had no such fortune, and so, he had waited for the settlement of affairs which at length came in 1690. Why did he not go up sooner? It is only possible to surmise, that the thought of becoming a preacher grew up more strongly in his mind after the re-establishment of Presbyterian government. He began to hope, that the Church would now afford him a sphere in which he could conscientiously labour. He dreamed, that the Church of Cameron and Renwick would yet be seen in all its freedom and purity, and that the scattered flocks of the hillsides and barns would find a home at last. It is not at all unlikely, that he had, by this time, begun to take a part in the religious meetings, which he had attended from boyhood. And some of the brethren may have urged him not to neglect the gift that was in him, at a time when ministers, holding their views, seemed likely to be scarce. There is ample proof,\* that he had held the office of an elder, before he sought license to preach. And elders, in those days, were expected to be men of prayer and gifts. Altogether, it is reasonable to suppose, that Macmillan's movement toward the University was dictated by a natural vocation, and that it was delayed till 1695 by the obvious difficulties of the situation in Church and State.

Mr. Hutchison has fallen into error as regards the position of Macmillan at College. He says,†—"His parents seem to have belonged to the Established Church, and it was only when he entered on his Arts course in the University of Edinburgh, that he became connected with the Societies." But we have seen that, according to contemporary evidence, he had been "from a boy a Separatist." During the two years' course in Arts, therefore, he simply stood where he was, remaining in full fellowship with his covenanting friends. The hour of decision had not

\* See Girthon Session Records, as quoted on p.

† *History*, p. 140.

come. No step needed, as yet, to be taken contrary to the strict terms of their communion. It is doubtful if he even attended the parish churches at this period. The document already quoted says that he only "broke off" some years before his trials for license, and "attended on the Publick Ordinances." Mr. Hutchison so far agrees, that he makes the rupture coincident with his entrance into the Divinity Hall. And this may well be so, since such entrance was a distinct breach of the terms of fellowship, forbidding the remotest dealing with the Establishment.

We conclude, then, that Macmillan, at his matriculation in 1695, was still a "Separatist," and continued to be so till the close of his Arts curriculum. His progress was unusually rapid, as he graduated A.M. in 1697, when his name appears in the printed list of graduates as *Joannes McMillan*. Although the degree was not equal, in the amount of knowledge certified by it, to the M.A. degree of a later time, yet to have taken it after only two years' study, and after a long time spent in farm-work, argued much industry and ability in the student. He must have put his whole heart into his books. Few men, going up from the country at his age, could have performed the like feat.

The subjects of study, according to Boston's autobiography, were Latin and Greek, along with "logics, metaphysics, ethics, and general physics"\*—in modern phrase, Logic and Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, and Mathematics or Natural Philosophy. The Professor of this last was James Gregory, brother of and successor to David Gregory, one of Sir Isaac Newton's friends and disciples, and the first to teach the Newtonian system in Scotland.†

Macmillan now took a step which he afterwards regretted keenly, although he maintained that his motives were pure. He

\* *Boston of Eltrick*, p. 34.

† J. H. Thomson in *Ref. Presb. Mag.*, 1869, p. 306.

“broke off” from his Society connection in Kells or Minnigaff, as well as at college, and began to attend the parish church. As I have pointed out, he could not help himself. He had decided to give the Established Church a trial. There alone he could obtain the needful training and license to preach. In the Societies there was no hope of either, for they now held a strictly negative attitude, training no ministers, and simply waiting on events. He acknowledged afterwards that he had erred at this point. We shall ere long find him subscribing a very humble confession that he had “displeased the Godly Remnant and greatly offended them before I entered the ministry, and that in my leaving them when then joined with them.” But there is no word here of any discreditable motive such as is attributed to him in the Presbytery’s “Examination.” This is a pamphlet of no less than 60 closely-printed pages, written in defence of the Presbytery’s action regarding Macmillan. The author is simply styled a member of Presbytery, but it is practically certain that he was Andrew Cameron, a brother of the famous Richard Cameron who fell at Airmoss. He was minister at Kirkcudbright, but had previously been minister at Carsphairn, so that he was familiar with Macmillan’s country, the Glenkens district. He is described as a man of “great piety and profound learning.”\* He did not scruple, however, to write as follows: “. . . I have from an honest and judicious person, who had it from the man to whom Mr. Macmillan spake the words . . . he spake these words when he was following his studies, and began first to hear the ministers of this Church, viz., ‘that though he had left the Separating People, yet he was still of the same mind with them as formerly, but was obliged to leave them because he could not have a mean of livelihood amongst them.’”†

\* *Fasti, in loco.*

† *Examination*, p. 45.

This piece of gossip evidently refers to the critical time at which Macmillan had now arrived. So far he had remained in full connection with the Societies. Now he was induced to leave them and enter the Divinity classes of the Established Church. It is at this moment that he is reported to have made the statement used against him. Some such remark, I believe, he might have made very naturally and innocently, because there is not a shadow of doubt that his heart was always with his old associates. But how could he attain a cure of souls among them? They formed no Church. Their express contention was that they were a remnant of the true and faithful Church of Scotland, and that therefore they were not separatists at all. They could not train, license, or ordain a minister. Only one Church in Scotland could do so, and Macmillan had a literal "Hobson's choice." It was either the Established Church or none. With much hesitation and doubt he entered on a course which at once severed him from his friends. The damaging expression—"he could not have a mean of livelihood amongst them"—assumes a harmless air if we put *modus vivendi* in place of the misleading English phrase, "mean of livelihood." I imagine that Macmillan used the common Latin phrase, and that he simply meant to say that, so far as professional training towards the ministry was concerned, the Societies could not help him beyond the Arts stage. At that point he must either abandon his hopes of the ministry or recognise the Established Church.

It is not for a moment admitted, however, that he was actuated by sordid motives. The charge was one frequently brought against him in later life by those whom he offended. It may be dismissed with contempt when levelled against a man who, so soon after obtaining a parish, perilled his whole professional position for the sake of what he deemed to be truth.

At a later period, when nearly ten eventful years had flown, he again sought and found a *modus vivendi* with the Societies. But it was so far from being a "mean of livelihood" that it was only after many years and hardships that a regular stipend was subscribed to the aging pastor.

In the Divinity Hall Macmillan pursued the same studies, in the same modes, as Thomas Boston had done a few years before him.\* Hebrew was taught by Rule, and systematic theology by Campbell. Latin catechisms and treatises were still the vehicles of instruction. To this practice of catechetical teaching in Latin we trace Macmillan's familiarity with the language, which he quotes frequently, but in a scrappy and technical fashion, much resembling a fashionable novelist's use of French. It was at the Divinity Hall that he formed his little library of choice theological authorities. A reference to the *Narrative* shews that he had been grounded in Turretin, Poole, and the Confessional Theology. Disputations or discussions on Latin theses formed part of the class-work. The sole survival in our day is the Latin exegesis. This practice of discussing some Latin question was carried outside the class-room into the Presbytery. We shall find the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright appointing to its members what were called "common heads," such as *An bona opera sunt necessaria ad salutem, et quomodo?* "Are good works needful for salvation, and if so, how?" This was propounded † to the minister of Balmaghie, who preceded Macmillan, and who bore the same name. "Common head" is *communis locus*, meaning simply a topic for discussion, a theological *commonplace*. To us, in our day, there seems something dry and profitless in such discussions, yet they tended to encourage study, and they gave even country ministers a certain

\* See *Thomas Boston of Ettrick*, p. 38, 39.

† See *Presb. Rec.*, May 28, 1700.



grasp of the Latin tongue, which at least bestowed the appearance of learning.

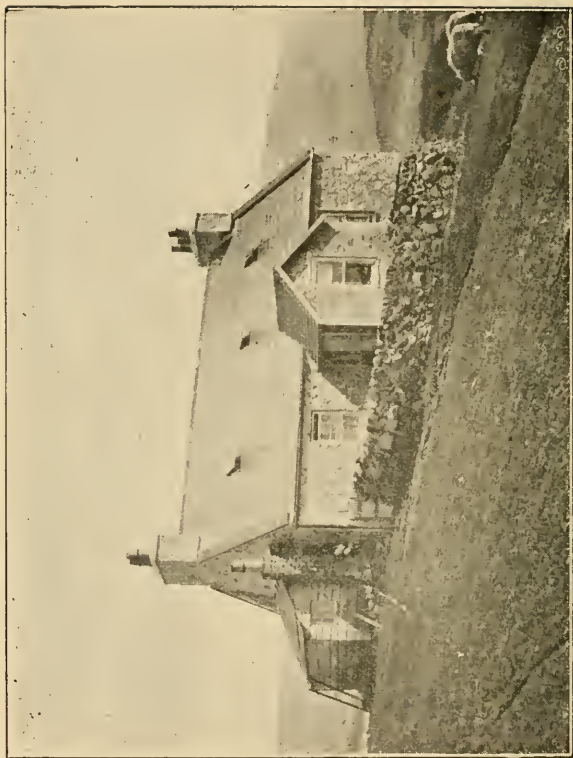
There is no evidence, that Macmillan was much of a Greek or Hebrew scholar, so that the original tongues of Holy Scripture were probably little known to him. That he was a zealous Bible student, appears on every page of his *Narrative*. The actual amount of scholarship carried away by him from Edinburgh, it is not easy to estimate. In the Presbytery's "Examination," it is said—" . . . as to his trials, they were too perfunctoriously and suddenly gone through, as the Presbytery is willing I should, in their name, acknowledge to the world. And therefore, they do justify the Lord, and own his Providence to be holy, in all the troubles and affliction they have had by this insufficient man's misbehaviour in the Church. Yet I know that, which gave occasion to their proceeding as above in his trials, was the name that he got of piety in the bounds; and that they hoped he would be diligent in his studies." . . . \* Coming from a man of "great piety and profound learning," this statement certainly bears an unfavourable air as regards Macmillan's professional attainments. On the score of piety, it will have the greatest weight as coming from an opponent. But Cameron magnifies Macmillan's piety at the expense of his learning, and roundly insinuates that the Presbytery let him off easily, in the hope that he would continue his studies.

It is no derogation from Macmillan's character, to suppose that he may have found it hard to regain lost time. Let it be remembered, that at his entry to the Divinity Hall he was about 29 years old, and had for many years been occupied in farming. He probably knew no Hebrew at all, and of theological works it is likely that he had no great knowledge. True, he had taken his Master's degree, but there is no reason to suppose that the

\* *Examination*, p. 43.







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standard, then, was very high. On the whole, as we leave him at the close of his theological studies, we may conclude, that he had profited as much by them as was possible in his circumstances. And one fact shines out, even by the lamp of hostile evidence, that he was a man of noted and undoubted piety. His character, in fact, stood so high for godliness, that even men of "profound learning" were ready to overlook some deficiency in other respects. It is not likely, that we shall blame them, although they appear to blame themselves. In the choice of candidates for the Holy Ministry, we should no doubt like to see piety and learning combined ; but where we cannot have both in any high degree, we should choose to have rather a little learning and a great deal of piety, than "profound learning" along with little piety, or none at all. Macmillan cannot be called unscholarly, since he received the imprimatur of his University. And it is quite certain that he was eminently a man of God, and so far fitted for the sacred profession which he had chosen.

## CHAPTER II.

1700.

### FAIR WEATHER.

“Chaplain” at Cally—Applies for License—His “Trials”—Supplies Balmaghie—The old-world Probationer—An Elder in Girthon—“Ruling Elder”—Call to Balmaghie—Suspected of “Separatism”—His Ordination—A “Scene”—His Vows.

MACMILLAN completed his theological studies some time in 1700, and returning to Galloway, he speedily found employment such as the young Levites of the Church then coveted. He became “Chaplain to the Laird of Broughton,” an estate and mansion-house lying in the parish of Girthon, and some neighbouring parishes. The property is now possessed by Mr. Murray Stewart, and the mansion-house is known as Cally. Situated near the picturesque town of Gatehouse-on-Fleet, it is a fine and massive pile, surrounded by an extensive park full of venerable trees.

Dr. Andrew Thomson describes this practice of seeking tutorships or chaplaincies in county families as being an alternative to the continuation of the usual divinity course at the “Hall.”\* The student put in so many sessions’ attendance, and then placed himself “under the care of one or other of the Presbyteries of the Church, for theological training and general oversight.” This is probably a case of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. The fact seems to be, that after completing the divinity studies (which were briefer than those now required), the student often

\* *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 39.

found it convenient to seek a situation as tutor, in order to support himself while waiting, first for license to preach, and then for a "call" to labour in some parish. But it is not likely that such a situation should give scope for "theological training and general oversight." Nor is it easy to see how a Presbytery could train the student within its bounds. In Macmillan's case, there was at all events little space for such training; for he spent only a short time with the Laird of Broughton. Mr. J. H. Thomson puts the period down at exactly six months, namely, from his license on 26th November, 1700, to his "call" to the parish of Balmaghie on 29th May, 1701. And he says—"It was the practice at that period for probationers to remain if possible within the bounds of their Presbytery . . . and they were not permitted to preach in another Presbytery without extract of license."\* Mr. Thomson is slightly in error as to the duration of Macmillan's tutorship or chaplaincy. He was certainly an inmate of the Broughton house before August 20, 1700, for in the Presbytery's minute of that date, he is already described as "Chaplain to the Laird of Brochtoun." This was when he first applied for license. It is likely, indeed, that he came straight from his divinity studies to his new situation, perhaps at May, 1700, so that he may have spent a full year in the pleasant and peaceful surroundings of the Laird's house.

It is interesting, also, to note, that Macmillan is officially described as the Laird's "chaplain," although he was not at the time a probationer even. Of Boston, on the other hand, Dr. Thomson says that he "did not claim to possess the functions of a family chaplain" at Kennet; although, in the absence of his employer, he conducted family worship.† In the eyes of the parish, however, I rather fancy that he would be regarded as "chaplain to the Laird," as Macmillan was. The truth is, that

\* *Ref. Presb. Mag.*, 1869.

† *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 41.

then and for a long time afterwards, such tutorships or chaplaincies were the regular avenues to preferment. Many instances can readily be given of the Laird advancing his "chaplain" to the post of parish minister,\* or urging his appointment in some other parish. It is true that this became commoner after Queen Anne's Act establishing patronage; but even prior to that enactment, the landed gentry exercised a paramount influence in the choice of the ministers.

What duties were done by Macmillan during his stay under the Laird's roof, we can only conjecture, since no documents have been found at Cally to throw light on the subject. Very likely, he had pupils to teach, and it is certain, from his being styled "chaplain," that he conducted the family prayers. This brief time of rest and new social experiences must have done much to fit him for the work that lay ahead. It was a period of expectancy and probation, especially after he had duly received his license to preach. He lost no time in applying for this, and the Presbytery's records give full details as to the "trials" which were prescribed.

On August 20, 1700, it is minuted:—

"Mr. John Macmillan, Chaplain to the Laird of Broughton, having lived in the bounds from his nativity, except the time of his being at the College, during which time his testimonials do witness his good behaviour and proficiency in his studies; being well known and of good report among the brethren and in the bounds; having previously delivered some discourses privately before some of the brethren, together with an homily on Matthew v. 8, before the last meeting at Polsack to their satisfaction, he is appointed to have an exegesis, *Au justificamur b'mis operibus coram Deo* ? at the next."

From this entry, it is evident that Macmillan had already been privately on trial before a committee of the Presbytery.

\* E.g., M'Kie, the successor of Macmillan.

These preliminary "trials" took place at Polsack,\* a spot near the present village of Laurieston. The Presbytery met frequently in those days, at this locality in the parish of Balmaghie. The usual meeting-place, however, was not Polsack, but Clachanpluck, which is identified with the lower part of the village. At other times, they met at Cullenoch, about a mile off. A glance at the map shows the reason of the choice, since this is the geographical centre of the Stewartry. In days when no railways existed, and travelling was chiefly on foot or on horseback, the members found Clachanpluck † with its outlying houses of Cullenoch ‡ or Polsack, the most convenient point of concentration. It is worthy of passing note, that Macmillan's first appearance before his future co-presbyters and judges was in the very parish to which he finally received a "call." The private rehearsing of discourses took place on June 29, 1700, so that it becomes nearly certain that Macmillan had come almost straight from the Divinity Hall to be tutor to the Laird of Broughton. The text of the homily is a fine one; "*Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.*" The exegesis appointed is simply what the Presbytery usually styles a "common head," and opened up the old controversy regarding faith and works.

Considering the slurs afterwards cast on Macmillan's scholarship, during the heat of the controversy, it is desirable to note also, the emphatic testimony in this extract to his "proficiency in his studies." It may further be remarked, that the statement

\* Polsack means "water of the hawks": cf. Polshag Burn in Carsphairn, and see Johnston's *Place-Names*.

† Clachanpluck is "hamlet of the plough;" cf. Plockton, and Pluckerston in Kirriemuir.

‡ See Examination, p. 43. Cullenoch (pron. *Killainoch*) appears also as Collain, and may mean "woodlands." Compare Cullen, Killean (pron. Killain)=church of John.

that the "trials" were "too perfunctoriously and suddenly gone through," is not borne out by the Presbytery's own records. We have already seen, that the candidate for license had made a private appearance, and submitted discourses and a homily, on June 29, at Polsack. Then he is appointed an exegesis, at Kirkcudbright on August 20.

Then, at next meeting, at Kirkcudbright, on September 17, he "had an exegesis and was approven; he is appointed, for exercise and addition, 2 Cor. v. 21, against the next." The text here is—"For he hath made him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin." And the prescribed "exercise and addition" (*i.e.*, a running commentary on the Greek Text, with a dogmatic exposition at the close) was duly delivered and approven, at Kirkcudbright once more, on October 29. At this last meeting it is minuted:—"Mr. Macmillan is to deliver his popular sermon . . . from Matt. xi. 30, sustain his disputes, answer extemporary questions, interpret psalm in Hebrew: Greek Test. *ad aperturam libri*, and his *Epocha*." The text of the popular sermon is again a fine one—"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Such sermon, of course, is only called "popular" in the sense of being a *concio ad populum*. In the ordinary sense, it may turn out to be a dreary enough performance, although Macmillan's popularity as a preacher soon proved that the term was applicable in every sense. The "popular" sermon was duly delivered and sustained at next meeting, at Kirkcudbright, November 26th.

The "trials" had now lasted no less than five months, and cannot fairly be described as "suddenly gone through." They may indeed have been "perfunctorious." Presbytery examinations are still believed to be so. But the record at all events shews that Macmillan satisfied every test. He gave discourses, homily, exegesis, exercise and addition, popular sermon; and he sustained some examination in the Hebrew and Greek



Scriptures. He gave also his *Epocha*, which seems to have been a narrative in Latin of some period of Church History. One such is specified in another case of licensing; it was a *templo condito Salomonico*, "from the building of Solomon's Temple." \*

At the close of these prolonged examinations, on November 26, 1700, Macmillan received license to preach. It is minuted that he engaged to subscribe the Confession of Faith, and "declared himself satisfyingly anent the government of the Church, and his resolution to adhere thereto, conform to the Acts of the General Assembly anent probationers, in all points." This was very much the usual form, with the exception of the clause about "declaring himself satisfyingly," which seems at times to have been omitted. If the writer of the Presbytery's pamphlet is to be trusted, the Presbytery had their suspicions; for he states that Macmillan was, both at this time and at his ordination, "expressly engaged to maintain the union, peace, and concord of this Church, in opposition to schism." And this, because they "knew that, since he had been a boy, he was a separatist." † However this may be, Macmillan now received his commission to preach within the bounds, and was immediately "appointed to supply at Balmaghie the Sabbath before the next Presbytery." ‡

At this time, the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright met ordinarily on Tuesday, continuing its sittings when necessary on Wednesday as well. The next meeting was at Kirkcudbright on December 24th, hence Macmillan's first pulpit appearance at Balmaghie was on Sunday, December 22, 1700.

He "supplied" the pulpit at a critical time. The unfortunate parish, after having for years suffered from the minister's ill-health, had now lain vacant for five months. The vacancy, in

\* See Presby. Rec., September 18, 1700.

† See *Examination*, p. 43.

‡ Presb. Rec., November 26, 1700.

fact, was announced at the very meeting which formally took Macmillan on trial for license, August 20th. It is then minuted, very curtly—"Mrs. Murdoch and Macmillan are removed by death since the last." Murdoch was minister of the parish "across the water," Crossmichael, whose church was in three years to be the scene of the deposition. Macmillan had been minister of Balmaghie from the year 1694.\* In the Kirk Session Records of Balmaghie, it is noted, at Macmillan the second's entry, that no record at all had been kept by the previous incumbent, "through reason of his valetudinary disposition, he being always in a dying-like condition."† He died, as his tombstone recites, on July 26, 1700, aged 37. And his wife, Catherine Williamson, followed him to the grave on August 31. Such is the brief record of the first John Macmillan, between whom and his successor no relationship has been established beyond the identity of names. The Presbytery continued to supply the pulpit once a fortnight till Macmillan was licensed. After this, they appear to have employed Macmillan, along with two others of their licentiates, named respectively Murdoch and Gordon, to fill the two vacant pulpits. Latterly, Macmillan and Murdoch were directed to supply them *per vices*,‡ or turn about.

This system, of employing probationers to fill vacant pulpits within the bounds under the Presbytery's oversight, compares favourably with the current mode of allowing them to wander over the Church at their sweet will. The newly-fledged probationer, at the present day, is let loose upon the community without guide or master. He generally succeeds in becoming a "helper" or assistant in some parish, and thereafter it is not

\* Nich. Hist. Gall. II. Appendix, p. 34.

† Session Book of Balmaghie, Sept. 18, 1701.

‡ Presb. Rec. March 18, 1701.

long before he “prints testimonials,” “puts in an application,” and “gets on a leet.” The discreditable “preaching-match” follows, with its varied scandals. At last, after more or fewer leets, he touches solid ground, and is elected by a majority, or in vulgar phrase “gets a parish.” The parish which chooses him usually knows little regarding the candidate beyond what is disclosed by his “testimonials,” his “trial-sermon,” or single appearance as a competitor, and the gossip or hearsay of the more active canvassers in the congregation. In this elder time, it was different. The probationer was utilised within the bounds where perhaps he had been born and brought up, and where he was thoroughly well known. In Macmillan’s case, he was a Galloway man who had lived all his life in the Stewartry, except during the five years, more or less, spent at College in Edinburgh. Preaching at Balmaghie, he was likely to see among his hearers more than one who had known him from boyhood. He preached also, not as a place-seeker or wandering candidate, but as the delegate and representative of the Presbytery.

Macmillan’s first sermon in his future pulpit was preached, as we have seen, on December 22, 1700. The congregation continued to hear him frequently in the same official character of “Presbytery supply” for four months more. The parish had been vacant nearly nine months in all, when, on April 17, 1701, the Presbytery records the following :—

“A supplication being presented to the Presbytery from the Elders of Balmaghie, desiring a minister to preach there on a week-day, and thereafter to try the minds of the people in reference to their calling Mr. Jo. Macmillan, appoints Mr. Johnston to convene the people on Monday come 8 days for the foresaid; and in case they be found unanimous, to draw up a call to Mr. Macmillan.”

This extract contains the name of Mr. Johnston, who at that time was minister of Girthon. He was therefore Macmillan’s

own parish minister. Not only so, but they stood at this time in a yet closer relationship. The Session Records of Girthon, under date December 22, 1700, state that—

“This day Mr. John Macmillan was received as an elder, he having promised to discharge the said duty as the Lord would enable him. He is appointed to wait on the Presbytery.”

This, be it remarked, was the very day Macmillan preached his first sermon, as a probationer, in Balmaghie. December was therefore a memorable month to him. On one and the same day in December, he was received as an elder, and at once made a member of Presbytery, as the Session's elected representative. In December, three years after, he was deposed. On December 2, 1706, he preached his first sermon as the minister of the United Societies. And in the first hours of December, forty-seven years after, he died. Such coincidences are common, and have often been remarked.

It must be noted that the Girthon record says that Macmillan was “received,” not “admitted” or “ordained” an elder in that parish. Hence, he must have been an elder already in some other parish, and most probably in Kells.\* The same day on which the Session received him, they had first solemnly signed a declaration of their willingness to subscribe the Confession of Faith, when called upon to do so; and they own themselves “publicly obliged to adhere thereunto by our National and Solemn League and Covenants.” This is signed by Patrick Johnston, minister, by eight elders, and by two deacons. Of the eight elders, two bore the name of Macmillan, viz., Andrew Macmillan and James Macmillan, so that the new elder added a third of the same surname to this Session.† It is not stated

\* Or Minnigaff, where a “John Macmillan in Craigen callie” was an elder in 1699.

† See Girthon Session Book, 22nd December, 1700.

that John Macmillan signed this formula, and probably he was received after the Session had performed this solemn act. The reference to the Solemn League and Covenant, however, has suggested to the present incumbent of Girthon,\* my kind informant, that already Macmillan's influence was at work in favour of the fuller recognition of that document as binding on the Church and nation.

At their next meeting, December 29, the Session record the fact that "Mr. John Macmillan, Chaplain to John Murray of Broughton, observed the appointment." In other words, he for the first time sat as a member of court at the meeting of Presbytery, held at Kirkcudbright on December 24, 1700.

Before leaving the Girthon period, it may be added that Macmillan's own signature appears later on in the Session Book, attesting that the Presbytery had examined it and found it correctly kept. He now signs as Presbytery Clerk, an office which as we shall see, was then held in turn by the presbyters.

Mr. Johnston of Girthon, then, the minister and brother-elder of Macmillan, proceeded in due course to Balmaghie, and met the congregation there at a public meeting, in order to "try their minds" as to giving him a call to be their pastor. This meeting took place in the church on April 30, 1701. On May 13, Mr. Johnston reported that he had "obeyed the appointment." At the same time, a petition was presented declaring the people's "willingness to subscribe a call, and earnestly desiring that a minister may be sent to moderate in a call" to Macmillan. Accordingly, they appointed Andrew Cameron to preach at Balmaghie on a Thursday and moderate in the call. Cameron was minister of Kirkcudbright, and the leading spirit in the Presbytery. It was by a strange irony of events that he was sent to arrange Macmillan's settlement in a parish, from which

\* Rev. W. W. Coats, B.D., to whom I owe valuable assistance.

he was so soon to advocate Macmillan's summary removal. This appointment as "moderator in the vacancy" brought Cameron into intimate relations with the people of Balmaghie, which he utilised afterwards, in the troubles, to address to them a "Letter" defending the Presbytery's action, and urging submission to their will.

On June 24, Cameron reported that the people were unanimous in the call. Thereupon, "the parish of Balmaghie being called, compeared James Livingstone, younger of Quintinespie, etc., from the said parish." These commissioners presented a formal call, which they asked the Presbytery to "render" to Macmillan. The Presbytery found the call "orderly proceeded and very unanimous," and delivered it to Macmillan, who was present. They at once began his "trials for ordination" by appointing him an "exercise and addition" on Colossians i. 11, to be delivered five weeks thereafter. The text is, "*Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*,"—surely no inappropriate motto for the troubled and anxious years soon to come to the new minister of Balmaghie.

The prescribed exercise was read and approved on July 30, and the Presbytery then appointed the following further "pieces of trial":—popular sermon on Psalm cxix. 19. ("*I am a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me*"),—Psalm 23 in Hebrew, "his *Epocha, a creatione mundi ad fluvium*" (from the Creation to the Flood), and Greek *ad aper-turam libri*.

On August 26, these "trials" were undergone: Macmillan "sustained his disputes, delivered the *Epocha* given to him, and was examined in the Hebrew, Greek, and controversial questions." He then signed the Confession of Faith, and "satisfied the Presbytery in the other parts of his trials conform to the Acts of Assembly." Further, he "obliged himself to adhere to

the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of this Church, conform to our engagements, and to follow no divisive courses, but submit to the judicatories of this Church, and the Presbytery in particular." Here is some token of the distrust which Cameron alleges to have been felt regarding Macmillan, as a born "separatist." The stringent pledge exacted from Macmillan to "submit to the Presbytery in particular," seems to foreshadow the issue afterwards developed in the conflict, as the main ground of the Presbytery's sentence, namely, that Macmillan had broken his pledge of submission.

However unwilling or distrustful they may have been, the Presbytery could not resist a unanimous call; and they proceeded, in the usual way, to appoint Mr. Samuel Spalding, minister of Parton, to serve the edict or intimation of the ordination. The ceremony itself was fixed for Thursday, September 18.

The preceding minute detail of the preliminary steps toward securing a minister, is not to be dismissed as trivial, since it reveals a state of things speedily and unhappily altered by the Patronage Act of 1712. In 1701, popular election still prevailed. It is quite true, as Dr. Andrew Thomson points out,\* that the free call of the people was often merely nominal, since the leading heritor could, as a rule, carry things his own way, as in the days of pure patronage. Macmillan's election, however, is absolutely clear of any such undue influences. The leading heritor, and former patron, was M'Ghie of Balmaghie. But at this time, and for long after, he was under Presbyterial discipline and on the verge of excommunication.† Another heritor, the laird of Slogarie, had just been solemnly sentenced from the pulpit of Balmaghie with the "greater excommunication."‡ It

\* *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 46.

† Presb., Rec., July 30, 1701, and elsewhere.      ‡ *Ibid.* Aug., 26, 1701.



was the heir of a very small and unimportant property, Quintinespie, near Laurieston, who, along with other commissioners unnamed, presented the call. Macmillan was the people's unfettered choice from the first. And this explains, to a measureable extent, the stedfastness of the people in clinging to their minister, when his trouble came soon after.

We must now wend our way to the tiny old church of Balmaghie, which held about 100 persons, or 200 at a pinch. Ordinations in a Galloway country parish are the highest of all high days. Every man and woman, who can be spared, turn out to witness a scene all the more impressive, because it may never be enacted again in the same place before their eyes. Aged people refer, years afterwards, to the day on which the minister was "placed," as a luminous point of parochial history. Balmaghie Church was packed, long before its tinkling bell announced the advent of the Presbytery.

The brethren met first in the modest Manse, and read over their minutes. The Moderator this day was Alexander Telfair of Rerrick, the only literary character in the Presbytery; whose curious pamphlet, *Modern Sadducism*, had been published in 1695, and had enjoyed a remarkable success. Two editions appeared in its first year in Scotland, and one in London.\* The clerk at the time (for the office was held in rotation) was William Tod of Buittle, afterwards to be Macmillan's fellow protester for a brief period. Besides these officials, all the other ministers were present except Bryden of Tongland. Crossmichael was still vacant, as it had been for the last year. The entire number of ministers present was eleven, with three elders. The Presbytery included fourteen parishes, Carsphairn and Dalry being still annexed to Wigtown, and the three *quoad sacra* parishes of the present list being of course still in the dim and distant future.

\* Nich. *Hist. and Trad. Tales*, p. 3, note.



The usual formalities were observed. The "edict" was returned as served; the people were three times called at the church-door to say if they had anything to object against Macmillan's "doctrine, life, or conversation." None compeared, and accordingly the Presbytery proceeded to interrogate Macmillan in the usual way as to his "subjecting himself to the Presbytery as at last meeting." He gave satisfactory assurances on this head.

A move was now made to the church, where Samuel Spalding of Parton, who had carried through the recent public forms, preached and presided. His text, a very significant one, was Luke xii. 42, 43,—"*who then is that faithful and wise steward?*" With these solemn and searching words ringing in his ears, Macmillan knelt down among his brethren, and received the imposition of their hands. When he arose it was in a new relation to the people, and one which neither he nor they were willing to sever for the space of 26 years. Seldom, indeed, has a closer bond existed between minister and congregation, than that which was riveted between Macmillan and Balmaghie. When at last he himself was forced to break it, the people still clung to him. And many lived and died, determined to know none other as their true and lawful pastor.

To us, the scene in the narrow and bare little kirk, on that September day, seems full of awe and solemnity. But there were not wanting the usual elements of human frailty. Cameron, who was present, looked on with suspicion as Macmillan took the ordination vows. He had exchanged a few words with Ewart of Kells, once more a member of Presbytery. And Ewart told him that the Presbytery were receiving a "bigot separatist" into their number. Rumours, too, soon flew about that there had been something like a "scene" during the service in church. Wodrow, with his marvellous scent for discreditable gossip, got traces of this obscure incident, if incident there was.

The passage is curious, and worth setting down, if only to show how untrustworthy his statements are :—

“July, 1710. He (Mr. Thomas Lining) likewise told me that Mr. John Macmillan, when ordained at Balmaghie, after the sermon he was called up and asked the ordinary questions. He answered all very distinctly, till the minister came to that, ‘will you promise subjection to church judicatories?’ At that time, he pretended (or if it was real) to faint, and not be able to speak. And yet, at the next question, he was well enough again, and answered it. Mr. William Boyd took this disingenuity so ill, that he presently left them in the time of the action, and took his horse, and went off. The Presbytery either did not see, or did not so much observe it, or did not stop upon this incident, as reckoning him really bound by being there and not refusing subjection.”\*

It is sufficient to point out, on this uncharitable passage, that William Boyd was not a member of the Presbytery at this time at all. He did not join it till April 1703, two years and a-half after the ordination. So, he and his horse ride away into thin air. And with his disappearance, the whole incident crumbles away. Lining, whom Wodrow quotes as his informant, was not of course present either. His account could only be obtained from his fellow-student Boyd, and Boyd also was not present. It may quite probably be true, that Macmillan shewed strong signs of agitation when the question was put. For this was the very point at issue all along. Were the Church Courts, as then constituted, entitled to that subjection which is due only to “free, faithful, and lawfully constitute” assemblies? Were they free? The Assembly of 1692 had been dissolved by the High Commissioner in the King’s name, in spite of the Moderator’s faint remonstrances. The Assembly of 1693 was prorogued by royal proclamation to 1694.† These facts Mac-

\* Wodrow, *Anal.* I. 290.

† See *Informatory Vindication*, p. 226, ed. 1707.

millan knew, and we shall soon see how deeply they were imprinted on his memory. Again, were the judicatories faithful? Time alone could shew, and this thought sustained him in his acceptance of the ordination engagement. Were they lawfully constituted? He knew, that great numbers of Episcopalian "curates" sat, or were entitled to sit, as members. The Presbytery, now ordaining him, was itself not quite free from irregularities. The Moderator, Telfair, was commonly reported to have no regular orders at all. A Committee of the Synod had actually inquired into his qualifications, and their report was favourable.\* Such scruples must have been in Macmillan's conscience, and we cannot feel surprised, that he showed outward signs of mental disturbance. It was, also, the most solemn moment he had yet reached. Everything yet done by him in recognition of the existing Establishment, appeared small compared with this vow of obedience, which seemed to cut him off finally from his old associates. But Wodrow's myth, about a base and childish trick of pretended fainting, has not a shred of accurate fact remaining. It was the product of bitter dislike and angry passion, produced in the minds of men, like Lining, who had quite thrown over their old friends and benefactors, and who illustrated the maxim, that none are such bitter foes, as those who have once been dearest friends.

Macmillan took his ordination vows honestly, as he had faced all his previous "trials." But he could not bind himself to continue subject to the Church courts, if they at any time ceased to fulfil their own compact, implicitly made with every presbyter. The compact was well enough understood by the subtle and acute men, who guided the Presbytery. It was, in effect, this, that the Church, and all her presbyteries individually, should strenuously labour for the attainment of absolute free-

\* *Nich. Hist. and Trad. Tales*, p. 4.

dom within her spiritual sphere. Macmillan entered the Church, prepared to take his part in the work of vindicating the Church's freedom, and regaining the "attainments," which had been sacrificed to policy and the urgencies of a Revolution. I am not at all sure, that he had not been privately encouraged to expect energetic action of the sort from his Presbytery. Much of the strong feeling, soon to be displayed on both sides, may have sprung from the sense of betrayal in Macmillan's mind, and the sense of questionable compromise in the minds of men like Cameron, Boyd, and Ewart. The Presbytery, on their own public confession, knew that their new member was a "separatist," a covenanter of Richard Cameron's school, a "man of the moss-hags." Yet they admitted him to their fellowship, without requiring any disavowal of his high and strict Church views. True, they offer the feeble excuse that they "knew not that he had ever been so bigot a separatist, as indeed he was." \* In plain language, they fancied that he was as pliable as themselves, and would settle down in Balmaghie, contented with a few formal protests and resolutions, never intended to be followed up by action. They allege, indeed, that he was specially bound and pledged, but this is, on the face of it, a pure imagination. No Court can impose anything beyond the legal obligations entrusted to it. Macmillan was not, and could not be, "expressly engaged" any more, than other members of the Presbytery. He gave the same signatures and promises. If any additional engagements were wrung from him, they were illegal and therefore not binding. I believe, however, that Macmillan, on his ordination day, gave his vows *ex animo*, fully purposing to be a loyal and faithful minister of the Church. But he ardently longed and hoped, to see the Church made such as would be agreeable to his old friends of the United Societies.

\* Examination, *Preface* as formerly quoted.

The cords of love and earliest association drew him still to these scattered Covenanters. He went in at the open door, but it was to hold it open for them. He could hardly, at the time, have anticipated that the swift course of events, in that stirring period, would so soon shut the open door upon both them and him, and thus drive him back to the spiritual home that he had left.

## CHAPTER III.

1700.

### THE PARISH.

Macmillan's predecessors from the Reformation--"Readers"--Vicars--Alison, an "outed" minister--Kirk, a "curate"--John Macmillan the first--Macmillan's first Session-Meeting--Size of church--Martyrs in churchyard--Size of manse and glebe--Amount of stipend--Scenery near manse and church--Houses of the poor--Their food, dress, and work--Sunday described--Character of people--Vagrants--Population--Cotmen--Relief of the poor--Morals of the lairds and common people--Strict discipline--Families in parish--General description.

LET us now try to gain some idea of the parish to which we have just seen Macmillan duly called and ordained. At such a distance of time, this is a difficult undertaking; yet by piecing our scattered materials together, we may summon up a faint picture of the Galloway parish of 200 years ago.

The cure was served in 1567, after the changes brought about at the Reformation, by one of Knox's "readers." At this time nearly all the Galloway parishes were served by such lay readers, although some are described as "exhorters." In the ancient list quoted by Nicholson,\* only important centres such as Whithorn and Kirkcudbright appear as having ministers. Robert Chapman, the Balmaghie reader, received £20 a year from the revenues of Holyrood Abbey. The contrast between minister and reader, or exhorter, is seen in their stipends. The readers or exhorters were paid sums varying

\* *Hist. Gall.*, i. 498, *seq.*; *Fasti*, ii.

from *one merk* to £20. The ministers received from £54 to £80. These sums, of course, are in Scots money, and the intelligent reader must divide them by *twelve* in order to gain a notion of the incomes of the clergy immediately after the Reformation.

Readers or exhorters continued to minister at Balmaghie until 1601, when the parish had a vicar in the person of John Fairfoul, A.M. (Edin.), who was presented to the vicarage by James VI. on the 22nd March of that year. He enjoyed but a short tenure, dying in 1605, at the early age of twenty-eight. Two subsequent vicars were William Dalziell, A.M., and Hew M'Ghie, A.M. (Edin.), who is described as "recommended by William, Bishop of Galloway." The Church at this time was a curious mixture of Presbytery and Episcopacy. It had bishops, and yet retained its Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assembly. Hew M'Ghie during his ministry provided a pair of Communion Cups, which Macmillan used constantly in his turn, and which are associated with the sanctity and superstitious awe of his name. When the compromise known as the "First Episcopacy" broke down, Adam Alison, A.M. (Edin.), became minister. He was a staunch Covenanter, and accordingly he was deprived in 1662. He appeared before the Privy Council on a charge of "still labouring to keep the hearts of the people from the present Government in Church and State." The case was delayed, but Alison no doubt continued to visit and teach his flock, in the fields and on the hillsides of Balmaghie. His place was filled in 1664 by a "curate," James Kirk, who was "rabbled," along with his fellows in Galloway, in 1689. Scot in his *Fasti* says that he married "Mistress Elizabeth Lauristone, heiress of Drumbeck and pertinents."

In 1693, at the re-settlement of Presbytery, the parish received as its minister John Macmillan, A.M. (Edin.), the first of the name in the parish. His ministry ended in 1700, when he



died at the age of thirty-seven. As we have seen, he came to the parish a sick man, and was always "in a dying-like condition." The result of this unfortunate state was, that the records fell into arrears, and it may well be supposed that the religious condition of the parish also suffered in proportion. Macmillan at his entry on September 18, 1701, found no documents on which he could base his future operations. But with characteristic energy, he called his Session together the Sunday after, and "1. inquired how many elders there was and deacons; it's answered, nine elders and two deacons. 2nd. inquired if the parish was divided into quarters amongst the elders; it's ansrd. No—there being a purpose of adding some more to their number, delays the division of the parish into quarters till the new addition. 3. inquired what utensils there was belonging to kirk and parish; it's ansred., None, save two cups, two tables, and boxes for collecting the poor's money. 4. inquired what money there was out belonging to the poor, and what security they had for it; it's ansred., about forty pound Scots. There is 7 pounds Scots of the 40 for the use of the poor, and otherwise."\* It is added that there were "no delations," *i.e.*, no scandals were at the time awaiting discipline. The collection at the church on this first day of Macmillan's ministry was £2 4s. Scots, or three shillings and eightpence sterling. It probably represented high water mark. According to modern estimates, it indicates an attendance of nearly 1000 persons. As the little church could not accommodate, even with much crowding, more than 200, the sermon was probably preached in the open air.

After this memorable day, when he "preached himself in," Macmillan had time to take stock of the heritage, into which he had come. We imagine him wandering round his church, and going in and out with that sense of possession which warms a

\* *Sess. Book of Balmaghie*, September 23, 1701.



newly-ordained minister's heart. It was nevertheless a pitifully small temple, measuring about 18 by 12 yards, and of the same simple type as Rutherford's church at Anwoth. It lay exactly east and west, with a tiny belfry at the east gable. This gable-end still partially stands, the sole relic of the ecclesiastical buildings of Macmillan's time. It has escaped demolition, because a fine monument to Macmillan's successor had been built against it before the old church was demolished and the present one erected in 1794. Macmillan's homely pulpit stood at the east end, and the congregation sat on rough benches or stools. The collection or offering was taken then as still, in boxes handed round by the deacons or elders. The bare interior was lit by numerous windows. In a Presbytery minute, dated September 13th, 1727, when a careful inspection was made, the tradesmen reported "eight windows all wanting glass, save one." These windows must have been very small, probably three on each side, and one at either end. The church was slated, while the manse had a roof of thatch. At the eastern end, lay the tombstone of the "two Davids Hallidays," martyrs of the Covenant. A little way from the western gable, slumbered George Short, a poor peasant, shot one night on the parish border, by a party of Lag's men. Macmillan doubtless often mused over these graves.

He descended the sacred hill, and entered what was to be his home for 26 years. The manse was, to modern ideas, a very humble and uninviting abode. The Presbytery minute, already referred to, shews that it contained only five rooms and a kitchen. The kitchen, and two principal rooms, one of them the minister's "study," were on the ground floor. Above, were two bedrooms, and a "closet" between. A narrow wooden stair formed the approach to the upper chambers. Built in continuation with the kitchen, were stable, barn, and byre.\*

\* *Presb. Rec.*, September 13th, 1727.

There was a glebe, of what extent I cannot discover ; but the annual value was estimated by the Court of Session in 1727\* at 100 merks, or over £5 sterling. Probably, therefore, it was as large as at present, viz. : 14 Scotch acres, lying in a ring fence around church and manse.

The Scottish reader naturally asks, what was Macmillan's stipend? From the Old Statistical Account,† we learn that when augmented in 1786, it was worth about £112. Assuming that there had been one previous augmentation, and that each increment was of three chalders, the stipend in 1701 may have been about £50.

Macmillan's total emoluments were therefore about £55 and his residence, such as we have seen it. But the real proportion, borne by such an income to those enjoyed by surrounding gentlemen, cannot be appreciated by using sterling money. If we remember that £50 sterling was equal to about 1000 merks, we gain an idea of the value of the benefice in those days. The income was beyond that of many "lairds" at the time, and constituted a very handsome provision in the eyes of the world.

That my estimate of Macmillan's stipend is near the mark, seems to be probable from what Wodrow says, in one of his references to Macmillan, where he reports that Macmillan was about to quit Balmaghie, having received from his supporters a promise of a stipend of 1000 merks yearly.‡ It is natural to suppose that the figure mentioned represented Macmillan's ordinary income at the time, which was to be made good to him by his new adherents.

We may now look out from the narrow windows of the manse, and try to conceive the landscape, and the parish features generally, as the new incumbent saw them in 1701.

\* Hutchison's *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 158.

† Sinclair's *Stat. Acc.*, 1794, *in loco*.

‡ Wodrow, ii., 88.

In full view, as at this hour, the placid river pursued its lazy course, between low marshy banks. All around were the cottages of crofts or those who earned their daily bread by toil. On a high mound near the river's edge was the ferryman's dwelling, close to which lay the ford used by those who travelled on horseback. Across the water, the parish church of Cross-michael could be seen, with its village clustering round.

The houses of the common people would, to us, appear indescribably wretched. They were built of stone plastered together with mud, and they had roofs of straw and turf, often far from providing shelter in rainy weather. The windows, like those in Balmaghie Church in 1727, had no glass. They were mere holes in the wall, through which the smoke from the peat fire escaped, when it failed to emerge through the chimney hole in the roof. The live stock were sheltered under the same roof as their owners. Man and beast entered by the same doorway, and slept in the one undivided chamber.

An aged woman of my own parish assured me, that as late as the year 1825, she had visited a house in Minnigaff where there was no door at all, but only an old sheet or curtain hung up as a substitute. In my own recollection, there were two cottages in Balmaghie having but one room, with earthen floor, drystone walls, and a roof of thatch ; and they were lighted by the two narrow openings already described, although it must be added that glass now filled the apertures, and a proper vent existed for smoke.

When Macmillan entered such cottages on his pastoral rounds, there was often no chair for him to sit upon, but only a stool or stone. If he found the poor inmates at meat, he saw them each pull out of his pocket a short horn spoon, which he plunged into the one wooden dish on the table. This spoon was known as a *mun*. The food was of the coarsest, brose, porridge, *sowens* (grain steeped in hot water), and occasionally kail boiled

with salt. Animal food was never tasted, except when a sheep or cow died of disease or old age. *Braxy*, indeed, or the flesh of a sheep cut off by some disease, was the prime luxury of the Galloway cottager.

The use of tobacco was already becoming general, and whey, or heather ale was the common stimulant. Tea cost at this time thirty shillings a pound, and was far beyond the dreams of the poor.

The dress of the people was on a par with their homes and fare. A Galloway man wore constantly, even in church, his broad blue bonnet, made in Kilmarnock. His coat was of *waulked*\* cloth, and homespun; his nether limbs were encased in white woollen hose; and his shoes were of rough leather, with one sole. But shoes were discarded in summer, and at other times wherever possible. Children got none until they were able to attend church. It must be added that the poor hardly knew what a shirt was; if such a thing was worn, it was made of coarse wool, and seldom saw the wash-tub.

The Galloway woman owed little to dress for her charms. The gown was of most unfashionable cut, and made of coarse plaiding or drugget. Young girls at home wore no head-covering, but *snooded* their locks with a piece of string or ribbon. At fair or church, they wore white linen mutches, slightly plaited above the brow. The farmers' wives covered their heads with coarse white linen *toys* when they went a-visiting.†

The sights and sounds of daily labour in the fields were quite familiar to the new minister. He himself had most probably taken his turn at the clumsy and overweighted plough, drawn by as many as four oxen and two horses, or by four horses abreast. Two men were required to manage this implement; one held

\* Hence such place names as Waulk Mill, and Bleach Mill or Blates Mill, both in Balmaghie.

† For all the above, I have drawn on Nicholson's *History*, II. 332-339.

the plough, while the second drove the cattle. A third man often attended with a fork to guide the coulter in the furrow. Thus, ploughing was then an eminently social task. Macmillan also felt no surprise when he saw his female parishioners carrying out manure on their backs in wicker creels ; for there were no carts, and, indeed, no wheeled conveyances for the most part. Burdens were carried on the back whenever possible ; in other cases, they were conveyed on horseback in panniers.

At this very time agriculture was beginning to rouse itself, and some of the better land was being redeemed from wild pasture ; but only coarse gray oats were grown, and the domestic supply was so small, that actual famine sometimes came very near. Stories circulated of poor people gathering herbs to make a meal : almost realizing the cynical advice of the ill-fated Foulon, "Let them eat grass !" \* Such miserable ones Macmillan was now to succour, according to the noble motto on his own signet. †

The fields had no dykes or fences, so that cattle and sheep had to be watched night and day during summer. At night the cattle were folded in turf enclosures, and one or two persons kept guard, lying under their plaids or blankets in the open-air. Sometimes, in rainy weather, they crept under a rude shelter of branches and turf, and so spent the long summer night beside their charge. Macmillan himself had, in his youth, kept such "sentry-go" on the Glenkens hills and pastures ; had listened to the Black Water as it brawled, or the Cree gurgling among the stones ; and had shared the shepherds' homely talk and tales.

Such was the summer's night for many Galloway toilers ; but in the short days of winter, life took on a drearier aspect. At the darkening, few lights shone in the cottages, for there were no candles, and paraffin was not yet. When the hour of family

\* Carlyle, *French Revolution*, I. 86, ed. 1895.

† *Miseris succurrere disco.*—*Aen.*, I. 630.

worship came, a *ruffy* was lighted. At other times, to secure a temporary torch, the poor man kindled a *heather cow*. The blackness of darkness brooded over the houses, and the inmates, huddled together for warmth, spent the long night in slumber.

The great event of each week was the Sunday. On the Saturday night, the men, in default of razors, applied the shears to their beard, by way of toilet for the next day's duties. The church was well attended, not for devotion only, but also for the sake of human intercourse. The people lingered around the green mounds of the kirkyard, innocent of tombstones for the most part, although sometimes a rough and nameless slab of whinstone was placed over a well-known grave. The mourners knew who lay beneath: the inscription was written in the heart. There are three or four such stones preserved in Balmaghie church-yard, mostly very small and of oblong shape. I reckon them to be the oldest. One, and one only, a long narrow fragment, bears the quaint inscription—"John M'Kine in Barnbord aught this ston Janu. (?) 1731, as propr right."

At eleven A.M. on Sunday, those who wished could hear the Scriptures read by an elder or other person, within the church. At noon, the minister came forth from his manse hard by, and the people flocked noisily into the house of prayer, where they still wore their blue bonnets while the psalm was sung. But at the first words of prayer, all stood up bare-headed, and so kept the *dies dominica* in the most ancient form. If the congregation at Balmaghie resembled Boston's flock at Ettrick, they were not so careful of decorum, as modern notions require. The Ettrick congregation, many of them, were used to get up noisily and leave the church during service, if their patience became exhausted. And some never entered the church at all, but continued their loud discussions in the churchyard.\* There is no record of the like,

\* *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 99.

here. But our later narrative will shew, that manners were ruder and more unceremonious, than at present.

According to a contemporary writer, however, the people of Balmaghie at this date were "tractable to their minister, and as submissive to the Presbytery and other judicatories of the Church as any people in Galloway; and they were so at the present Mr. Macmillan's ordination."\* It is added, that under his ministry, they fell off in these respects; but this will be a matter of opinion. After seven years of a minister "always in a dying-like condition," any congregation might be expected to be in a languid and undemonstrative mood. The second Macmillan, however, used his time so well, that in less than three years the whole parish was ready to move, as one man, for the continuance of his pastoral connection.

When Macmillan, mounting his horse, began to perambulate his wide parish, he found the population very thin, as might be expected from the bad times and hardships of life. At this time, nearly half the population of Scotland was in a migratory state; at least, Fletcher of Saltoun estimated the vagrants at 200,000 in 1701, when the entire people numbered only half a million.† The estimate is, on the face of it, grossly exaggerated; but it may be believed, that the difficulties of a settled livelihood forced large numbers of people to wander from place to place. The population of country parishes was liable to sudden and capricious changes, owing to the ebb and flow of the vagrant stream. Presbyteries kept a jealous eye on these wanderers, whose irruption caused both scandals and expense. To estimate the population of Balmaghie is difficult, but taking the figures given in the Old Statistical Account, we find that in 1755 it was 697, and that in 1793 it had increased to 862. It may, therefore, be conjectured that in 1701, the population was not much above 500 souls, if, indeed, it can be placed so high.

\* *Examination*, p. 6.

† Cunningham, *Church History*, I. 204.



In 1710,\* the Presbytery had before them a protest in Macmillan's favour from "84 heads of families, besides young men." Allowing four persons for each family, this gives us a population of 336. And as nearly every one in the parish adhered to Macmillan, we may safely conclude that the actual population was between four and five hundred.

Scattered over an area of about sixty square miles, the inhabitants were certainly not numerous. And the desolateness of large tracts was brought about by the natural tendency of the people to gather into "clachans" or villages. In the first place, as always, there was a group of houses around and near the church and manse. Then another considerable group lay near the principal landowner's house of "Balmaghie Place." But the chief mass was consolidated at Clachanpluck, "the village of the plough," which was also the geographical centre not only of the parish, but also of the Presbytery and the county. Here, or at Polsack or Cullenoch quite close at hand, the Presbytery met frequently. Here, was the original parish school, which, in 1794, had forty scholars, the schoolmaster drawing a salary of £8, with an equal amount in fees.† Clachanpluck, now Laurieston, was the only village in the parish. The S.P.C.K. was not yet founded, and the village afterwards built on its lands at Bridge of Dee did not exist. Macmillan's flock were housed chiefly at the two points specified, the church and the village.

The farms were of small size, as a rule, and such labourers as were employed were young lads and men who slept in the out-houses. In 1794, there were only 18 "benefit-men," or in modern phrase "cotmen," being married ploughmen and shepherds having separate houses on the farms. At the same date,

\* See contemporary MS. Narrative : Presb. Rec., Jan. 17, 1710.

† Old Stat. Acc., *in loco*.



it is stated that 34 of the farmers paid rents under £30 a year. As the process of consolidating the small farms into larger ones had already been going on, we may suppose that in Macmillan's day there were even more of these "crofters" in the parish.

In Clachanpluck and at the Kirk Clachan, now known as Shankfoot, the few tradesmen had their abodes. In 1794, there were 8 shoemakers and 8 tailors, the latter a migratory class who went from farm to farm making or mending. There were also 8 "dram-sellers," of whom most resided in Clachanpluck, although there was always an alehouse, or "change-house," quite near the church. There were 2 "boatmen," one at the church, the other at Boatcroft. For bridges were hardly known as yet, one of the first having been built, over the "Water of Dee," by a synodical collection shortly after Macmillan entered on his ministry. Glenlochar Bridge, however, did not link Balmaghie to Crossmichael, until the present century had begun. When Macmillan went to the Synod, he crossed the river either by the ford or in the ferry-boat, and then jogged onward to Wigtown or Stranraer, on his stout "Galloway nag."

We may be certain that Macmillan paid his first visits to the poor, of whom in those days Kirk-Sessions took special and tender care. We have seen how strictly he inquired after the poor's money, and the security upon which it was lent out. This fund was collected from Sunday to Sunday, and applied, after deducting the fees to officials, to the relief of the impoverished, without regard to creed or church. In 1794, the parish had so far improved in respect of paupers, that only five were on the roll. The church collections then amounted to about £10 10s. annually. In 1701, the number of poor was probably far larger, and the fund available a good deal smaller. But money went further, and the doles were smaller in amount.

Besides the toiling cottagers and farmers or crofters, there were some resident "heritors" or "lairds." As we have seen,

the heir of Quintinespie was the leading commissioner in presenting Macmillan's call to the Presbytery. The lairds of Balmaghie, Slogarie, and perhaps others, lived on their estates. In 1727, when the heritors were summoned to meet the Presbytery regarding repairs on church and manse, only four gentlemen came. They were Colonel William Maxwell of Cardoness, Patrick Heron of that Ilk, Alexander Gordon of Carleton, and Alexander M'Ghie of Airie. None of these seem to have resided. It has been pointed out already that the lairds of Balmaghie and Slogarie were both under presbyterial discipline when Macmillan began his ministry. The former died before a final decision was arrived at; but the latter had just been excommunicated from the parish pulpit. It was the greater excommunication, a terrible weapon of ecclesiastical censure, which cut the victim off from converse either with God or with man. Both these gentlemen had refused to stand in the "public place of repentance," and "wearing the habit of sackcloth"; and Macmillan was to have much anxious dealing with them. They were both M'Ghies, a family which at one time had owned most of the parish, and still exercised great influence.\*

The morals of the common people could not be expected to excel, when the leading gentry of the place lived in such open defiance of religious duties. The Session Book is painful reading, but one cannot feel surprise to find that people who lived in one-roomed hovels were frequently in fault. Drunkenness was so prevalent that the Presbytery issued a pastoral letter in reference to this vice. The liquor, as we saw, was fermented whey or heather ale; as yet, whisky and brandy were not in general use. Wine, of course, was confined to gentlemen's tables. The Session under Macmillan shewed the greatest vigilance in reproving not only scandalous sins of immorality or

\* See Presb. Rec., *passim*.

intemperance, but other and what might seem to us trivial offences.

The following extract is an example of this :—

“ 1702, March 8.—Session met, after prayer to God, etc. John Bennet called, and compearing, was interrogate concerning the drying of his corn the day before the fast, and that the kilner of it, vizt., John Cambel, bade him come down the next night and lay it on. He told his family of it, and his son Alex., who was not at the kirk that day, had gone over and done according to the direction of the kilner, and he himself went over after he had come home, and laid it on. Alex., being asked if he had gone the night of the fast and dried his father’s corn, said he did. John Cambel, being asked whether or not he laid on John Bennet’s corn the night of the fast, in order to dry it, answered he did. The Session considered it was in ignorance they thought they could do so after sermon was ended, and ordered a sessional rebuke ; they were accordingly soberly censured.”

It is instructive to notice, that extreme strictness in the consistorial court existed along with a never-ending crop of scandals. One may well infer, that the Session discipline, with its prolonged penances, its public appearances in sackcloth, its fines and censures, its rebukes and absolutions, tended rather to lessen the sense of sin. The wrong-doer felt that, after all, he could “satisfy” the Session, and so escape temporal and eternal retribution. The whole Sessional discipline was, and is, an attempt to do the work of the Roman Confessional in a safe and unquestionable manner. Auricular and private confession to the priest had wrought endless mischief, whenever the priest was a bad or careless man. The consistory took the priest’s place. Confession was now made to several men, not to one. Though nominally private, it was really public, and often issued in a public penance. The Session, a body made up almost wholly of laymen, many of them possessing much piety but little

learning, heard the confession, fixed the penance, and gave the absolution. The inevitable result was, and is, a lowering of public morals. The sense of shame was dulled. The true idea of sin, as an offence against God, was replaced by the defective notion of sin as an offence against the Church. The proper proportion of sins also, must have been obscured, when a poor man could be "soberly censured" for drying his corn at a kiln on the fast-day.

Before leaving the episode of the kiln, I may add, that the offender, John Bennet, appears among the 87 signatories to the protestation in Macmillan's favour presented at the trial in Balmaghie Church, December 28th, 1703. His son Alexander, the real offender in the corn-drying incident, is the very last to sign. Macmillan's rebuke had not, therefore, lessened their attachment to him.

The list of names attached to this document gives us a certain acquaintance with the actual *personnel* of Macmillan's parish. The entire list was faithfully engrossed in the Presbytery's minute-book, and represents nearly every family in the parish. It includes six elders and two deacons, but apparently no heritors at all. Of the elders, one bears the name of Murdoch, afterwards notorious in connection with the Glebe Riot in 1713. Another has that of M'Guffog, of a family descended from Colonel M'Guffog, who fell at Flodden. Here also are Hugh Mitchell and John M'Kine or Cunie in Barnboard, who went together to Kirkcudbright in 1710, to protest against Mr. M'Kie's settlement as minister in room of their beloved pastor. It was the same John M'Kine who "*aught this ston Janu. (?) 1731, as propr right.*" The signature of Thomas Short reminds us, that George Short, a martyr of the Covenants, lay in the kirkyard: perhaps the father of Thomas. There is a John Knox, too, surely in fitting company. And lastly, Alexander Charters is here, of whom his epitaph says:—

“ True to the Church, like rocks unmoved,  
In rough and stormy seas,  
Was Alexander Charters still,  
In reeling staggering days.”

He died in 1715. Although “like rocks unmoved,” his name appears in 1710 among those who prosecuted a call to William M’Kie, to be minister in Macmillan’s room. But there may well have been two Alexanders, and in any case, a man is entitled to change his mind.

All the leading family names are here: Gordon, Geddes, Milligan, M’Kinnel or M’Connel, Cochrane, Murdoch, Clachrie or M’Clacharty, M’Guffog, Craig, M’Nish, M’Gowan, M’Minn, M’Cartney, Shennan, Bennet. These names still persist. The blood of the Covenanters, though perhaps a little adulterated, runs in the veins of the people to-day.

Some faint picture of the old parish may loom out to us from the foregoing remarks. We have to conceive a parish thinly peopled, with a hardy but ill-clad and ill-fed body of inhabitants, housed in huts and hovels where we should not now-a-days care to put a dog. We have to think of them dwelling almost *al fresco* amid wide unfenced fields, or beside pathless moss-hags, or in little dingy groups of thatched houses. We have to remember that few of them could read or write, yet in nearly every home there was family worship of praise and prayer. We must bear in mind too the absence of roads and bridges, the rude implements of husbandry, the uncultured and superstitious ways of the peasantry. It was the day of brownies and witches, charms and spells. Nor, above all, can we form a fair judgment of the troubles which arose without always remembering the martyrs’ graves and the stern wild enthusiasm of the Galloway Covenanters. For many of Macmillan’s parishioners had been among the “hill folks” or “wild folks”: some had narrowly escaped death for conscience sake. Scotland’s “Reformation,

Covenants, National and Solemn League," were household words with all. The advent among such people of a minister of Macmillan's early training and associations was like the introduction of a naked light into a coal mine. An explosion was apt to ensue, unless unusual good fortune were experienced. And Macmillan was not likely to gain much from the arts of a diplomatist or ecclesiastical tactician. He was now lodged in a position where his strength and weakness alike were soon to be manifested—his strength as a minister of mercy to the wretched, his weakness as a member of church courts. Let us turn, now, from his solitary figure, musing over the martyrs in his kirkyard, and direct our regards toward the men who had just ordained him, and who, in a short time, were destined to judge and depose him.

## CHAPTER IV.

1700.

### THE PRESBYTERY.

Number of members—Reid—Boyd—Warner—Ewart—Cameron—Telfair—  
The Ringcroft Ghost—Monteith and his “Testimony”—Hay—Tod—  
Murdoch and Gordon—Johnston, Spalding, Bryden, Clark, Falconer  
—Order of parishes geographical—List of the members.

AT the date of Macmillan's ordination, September 18th, 1701, the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright consisted of fourteen clerical members. At the time of his license in the month of November, 1700, there had been only thirteen. But since that time, Andrew Ewart of Kells had returned to the Presbytery, his parish having been re-annexed by the General Assembly. The four parishes of the “Glenkens” seem to have oscillated between the Presbyteries of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright. It was not till April, 1703, that Carsphairn and Dalry were restored, making the total membership up to sixteen, where it stood until the three *quoad sacra* parishes of the present list were added. At a later time in our story, an agitation arose for a separate “Glenkens Presbytery,” but it came to nought. The brethren of the Glenkens, however, continued to be a sort of “third party” or “cross-bench,” and at this period, they were, all four, men of marked individuality and considerable influence in the Church. Their names were John Reid of Carsphairn, William Boyd of Dalry, Thomas Warner of Balmaclellan, and Andrew Ewart of Kells.

JOHN REID, A.M., became minister of Carsphairn in 1694, and died in 1737, when he was succeeded by his son Andrew.



Carsphairn was a new parish, having been formed in 1639 out of Kells and Dalry, at the instance of some local gentlemen. These persons had built a church at their own expense, "out of love to the salvation of souls of barbarous and ignorant people, who has heretofore lived without the knowledge of God, their children unbaptized, their dead unburied, and no way for getting maintenance to a minister." This is the language of a "supplication" presented to the General Assembly on 6th June, 1638, which also describes Carsphairn as "a very desolate wilderness, containing five hundred communicants." The Assembly recommended a collection for behoof of the parish to be made in all parishes south of the Tay. The ministry of John Semple soon rendered its name familiar. He appears in Patrick Walker's narrative\* as a singular combination of simplicity and shrewdness, superstition and powerful common sense. Imprisoned in the Castle of Edinburgh at the Restoration in 1660, he was indulged, at the instance of Viscount Kenmure, in 1672; fined in 1673 for not observing the anniversary of the Restoration; and finally cited in August 1677 before the Privy Council. He came forward undaunted, and when threatened with death or banishment, replied in his own characteristic style: "He is above that guides the gully! My God will not let you kill or banish me, but I will go home and die in peace." And home he did go, and died at the age of 75. He left his savings to the poor of the town of Kirkcudbright. His successor was a "curate," Peter Peirson by name, who had formerly been in Crossmichael. He was a Master of Arts, a man of great courage and determination, and unsparing in his denunciation to the authorities of non-conformists and conventiclers. Owing to his remaining celibate, and living quite alone, without even a servant, as well as for other reasons, he was suspected of popery. This, as well as his untiring efforts to force his rude flock to attend his minis-

\* *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 1727.



trations, brought about the deplorable tragedy of November 1684. A deputation of two had waited on him at the manse, to exact a promise that he would cease to lodge informations against Covenanters and non-hearers. He promptly seized his sword and pistol, and with his back at the door of the study, refused to permit them to leave. In the struggle which ensued, one of the men (supposed to be James Macmichael) shot him dead. He was 39 years old at the time.\* Such was the parish in which John Reid had laboured since 1694. The people were keen partisans of the Covenants, and it is little to be wondered at, that Reid should have made one of the three protesters against Erastian compliances, who exercised the minds of the Presbytery in 1703.

WILLIAM BOYD, after studying at the Glasgow University, joined the United Societies, at whose expense he was trained in Holland, along with Shields and Lining, for the ministry. He obtained license to preach, but no cure of souls. His abilities drew on him the favourable notice of William of Orange, who made him a friend and the confidant of his designs. At the Revolution, he accompanied William to Britain, and was the first to proclaim him king at Glasgow Cross. The Assembly of 1690 received him into full communion, and he was at once ordained to Dalry. Along with his friends, Lining and Michael Shields, he attempted to gain a hearing at the first Revolution Assembly on the contentious points; but "moderation" was the watchword of the day, and they were gently silenced. Rightly or wrongly, he and Lining were regarded by the Society people as apostates and deserters. And Howie asserts that Boyd employed a strange expedient to clear Dalry of the "hill folk," by trying to get the recruiting officer to press them into the army.†

\* See *Fasti*, *in loco*.

† Scot's *Fasti*, II. ; Howie's "Appendix to the Faithful Contendings," p. 474 ; J. H. Thomson, *Ref. Presb. Mag.*, 1869.

The story is probably untrue, but it shows the bitter feeling which arose between Boyd and his former friends and benefactors. Such a feeling boded no good to any one who should espouse their cause within the Presbytery.

THOMAS WARNER, A.M., had suffered during the brief supremacy of prelatie principles. He became minister of Balmacellan in 1672, having accepted the Indulgence. In 1679, he was charged with a breach of the terms of the Indulgence, inasmuch as he had gone outside his parish to preach at conventicles, and had "convened with Mr. John Welsh, late of Irongray, and other declared traitors and intercommuned persons." As a punishment, he was deprived of his pension out of the stipend until further orders. He persisted in his disobedience, and was declared fugitive in 1684. He escaped death, however, and in 1690 he was included in the Act of Parliament rescinding all fines and forfeitures. The parish had a "curate" in 1685, viz., Patrick Geddie, A.M. (St. Andrews), son of "Mitchell Geddie, skipper in St. Andrews." Geddie was "rabbed" in 1689, and died the same year. Warner, reinstated, became a member of the 1690 Assembly. He was the last survivor of the pre-Restoration ministers, having come through all vicissitudes unharmed. He died, *Father* of the Church, in 1716, at the age of 85, and in the 59th year of his ministry.

ANDREW EWART, A.M., (Edin.), was the eldest son of the Provost of Kirkcudbright. As a young man, he had suffered in the prelatie times. Becoming minister of Kells in 1691, he died in 1739, aged 78, in the 48th year of his ministry. Ewart was, for a time, a member of the Presbytery of Wigtown, but returned to Kirkcudbright shortly after Macmillan was licensed. He was proprietor of the lands of Mullock and Drummorie, a man of substance, and married to Agnes Grierson, heiress of Capenoch, as his second wife.

Such are the meagre particulars to be gleaned regarding the

four "Glenkens men," which are, however, sufficient to show their interesting character and position. The real leader of the Presbytery was not among them, although Boyd and Ewart came a fair second. He was ANDREW CAMERON, once minister in Carsphairn, but translated to Kirkcudbright, where he died in 1721, in the 32nd year of his ministry. He was of the purest Covenanting lineage, being a brother of Richard Cameron himself. Like Boyd, he owed his education as a preacher to the United Societies, who sent him to Holland. He was an enthusiastic plotter and wirepuller, and tried to persuade Renwick to join Argyll's expedition, but without success.\* He himself took part in the disastrous campaign, and on its failure, he returned to Holland. He is described as a man of "great piety and profound learning,"† but his sole literary memorials are the "Letter to the parishioners of Balmaghie," and the *Examination* of Macmillan's "True Narrative." It is hardly possible to judge of his learning from such slender evidence; but his pamphlet is unquestionably superior to Macmillan's from a literary point of view, and shews a great command of dialectical language. The Presbytery put him forward as their protagonist on all occasions, and it is impossible to doubt, that he moulded the policy which ended in Macmillan's abrupt deposition. As minister of Kirkcudbright, he held the richest benefice in the Presbytery, and his parish, sometimes even his "chamber," was the scene of most of the Presbytery meetings. He died without seeing the end of the Balmaghie troubles, and the Anwoth minister, George Gartshore, succeeded him.

Quite the most curious figure, to modern eyes, was ALEXANDER TELFAIR, A.M., (Edin.), whose studies in spiritualism have attracted attention from the versatile Andrew Lang. Tel-

\* Renwick's Letters, May 15, 1685; July 9, 1685: *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine*, 1869.

† *Fasti*, II., *in loco*.

fair belonged to a good family, and in 1687 entered the household of Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, as domestic chaplain or tutor, exactly as Macmillan went to Murray of Broughton. His salary was 100 merks, or about £5, a year. Nicholson \* gives, as an old tradition, the following account of the odd way in which Telfair became minister of Rerrick : “ . . . Mr. Alexander Telfair had come, somewhere from the high country, to the foot of the water of Urr, to get a passage to the English side. Being detained by contrary winds, or otherwise disappointed of a passage, he took up his residence at Auchencairn, where he began to collect the inhabitants together, exhorting, preaching, and praying in a kiln ; and his ministrations pleased them very much. At this time, the curate of Rerrick being very obnoxious to the parishioners, they gathered in a mass, went to the manse, and ordered the curate to leave it and make room for Mr. Telfair, in twenty-four hours’ warning. This, he was obliged to do, and Mr. Telfair accordingly took possession ; and it is believed that he had no other ordination to the ministry.” This is a strange tale, yet quite in keeping with the unsettled times in which it is placed.

Telfair’s remarkable pamphlet is entitled, “A True Relation of an Apparition, Expressions, and Actings, of a Spirit, which infested the house of Andrew Mackie, in Ringcroft of Stocking, in the Parish of Rerwick, in the Srewatry of Kirkcudbright, in Scotland, 1695, by Mr. Alexander Telfair, Minister of that Parish ; and attested by many other persons, who were also eye and ear-witnesses.”†

This astonishing example of credulity and superstition must not be allowed to pass without notice, even at the cost of a digression. The “Spirit” which infested Andrew Mackie’s

\* *Historical and Traditional Tales*, p. 4.

† See this tract reprinted in Nicholson’s *Hist. and Traditional Tales*.

house completely puzzled the minister, whose prayers and exhortations proved unavailing. It was a humorous being, and delighted in throwing stones, loosing the cattle from their stalls, filling the house with peat-smoke, hiding pots and pans, and banging people about the body. It did not respect even the minister's sacred person, for he pathetically says,—“Stones and several other things were thrown at me. I was struck several times on the sides and shoulders very sharply with a great staff, so that those who were present heard the noise of the strokes.” If the shrewd reader will recall our account of the darkness of these Galloway houses and then remember that the manifestations took place at night, and in winter, he will have no difficulty in seeing a mischievous or crazy person at the bottom of the mystery. The ghost was, in point of fact, *seen*—“as it were a young boy about the age of fourteen years, with grey clothes and a bonnet on his head.” We should rather think so! The young boy deserved a sound thrashing for his tricks! But in that solemn and highstrung time, these puerile pranks were taken *au sérieux*, and Mr. Telfair carried his griefs and perplexities to the Presbytery.

That reverend body heard the gruesome tale without a smile, and straightway appointed a committee to exorcise the Ringcroft ghost by fasting and prayer. The committee consisted of Murdoch of Crossmichael, Macmillan of Balmaghie (the first of that name), Spalding of Parton, Falconer of Kelton, and Monteith of Borgue. They were chosen, no doubt, because of age or piety, for it is observable that Cameron of Kirkcudbright was not among them. His shrewd mind would have been uncongenial to the business of ghost-laying. Monteith of Borgue was himself a specialist in these affairs, having had in 1690 a vision of great “light, power, and presence.” He had also various wrestlings with Satan, and heard voices whispering to him. We shall see this more fully when we come to speak of him. Per-

haps, there were others on the committee equally at home in occult phenomena.

The Committee assembled at the haunted house, and straightway the wicked sprite assailed them, without remorse or reverence. Poor Monteith, in particular, received a "great stone, more than a quarter weight," on his back. Yet, "he was not hurt." While he was praying, another stone hit him "on the breast." The members were all witnesses of these "sinful games," except Macmillan of Balmaghie, whose chronic ill-health would furnish an excuse for absence. The evil spirit does not seem to have minded the Presbytery much, for it went on from bad to worse, in spite of "a day of humiliation" being held on its account in the parish. At last, it took to setting the house on fire, and the poor inmates were driven to leave it and live in the stable. Its final demonstration was its burning a "little sheep house," perhaps, after Charles Lamb's recipe, for roast mutton. The sheep, however, were saved, and this ended the ghostly amusements. It may be noted, that it was now the month of May, and the mischievous bipeds, who were in my opinion aping the powers of evil, could no longer carry on their operations during the night without fear of detection. But Telfair had no such "rationalistic" views. He at once published his account, attested by the Presbytery's Committee and several parishioners. The name of Andrew Ewart of Kells appears as a witness; perhaps, he had taken Macmillan's place. The whole episode throws a curious light on the superstitious feelings and beliefs of the time. Like modern spirit-rappers, Telfair regards these diabolical manifestation as yielding indisputable proof of a future life, confuting "Modern Sadducism," and establishing the existence of spirits, good and evil, and "consequently, a Heaven and a Hell."\* He also deduces the duty of family worship, as a safeguard against

\* See his preface to the tract: *Nich. Hist. and Trad. Tales*, p. 5.



Satan, and warns ministers and congregations to be on the alert against the adversary, the devil, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." The whole tract is most singular, in its simplicity and childlike superstition, and well repays a careful reading. Its success was immediate and rapid as a literary venture ; and Telfair had henceforth the honours of a literary man among his brethren.

Hardly less interesting, as a study of *sancta simplicitas* and old-world faith, is JAMES MONTEITH of Borgue, another co-presbyter of John Macmillan. Educated at Glasgow University, he went to Ireland in 1687, and returning, became schoolmaster at Kilmarnock in 1689, while awaiting preferment. He received license to preach from the Presbytery of Irvine in 1692, and immediately accepted a unanimous call to Borgue. There, he was ordained in January 1693, and there he laboured untiringly, in his own painful way, till his death in 1744. He had attained his jubilee, and died, according to his editor and successor, Samuel Smith, "feared, honoured, and loved by his flock."\* In the Fasti, he is depicted as a man of "remarkable piety and zeal, but tinctured with superstition," a description fully borne out by the Ringcroft proceedings, and by his own writings. He was also, however, a strong upholder of the people's rights, as he deemed them to be ; for during the dyke-levelling riots in the Stewartry in 1724, he was reported to be an instigator of the mob. He is said to have declared that "the government of the country was now in the hands of the tenantry," a thesis which must have made him highly obnoxious to the dyke-building landowners. We may conjecture, that Monteith was therefore a keen politician, and like most parish clergy who are faithful pastors, almost too much alive to the hardships suffered by the labouring poor. The agrarian question of his time was the

\* See reprint by Rev. Samuel Smith, 1841 : Introduction, p. 48.

result of the old communal system of agriculture. The land was held in *runrig*—*i.e.*, there were no fences except such as natural obstacles, a loch, a burn, a river, or a hill, provided ; and the cattle and sheep had common pasture. The crops were divided *pro rata*, amid a good deal of quarrelling and bad feeling. With the awaking of agriculture at the beginning of the eighteenth century, such a state of things became impossible. Landowners began to enclose pasture and field, and no doubt, in the process, some old rights were infringed. At all events, a violent popular feeling arose : mobs marched in good order, and overthrew the new dykes. A collision had well-nigh taken place between the mob and the yeomanry, but peace was preserved by tact and patience. The wave of excitement spent itself, and its last effects were felt on the Duchrae estate in Balmaghie.\*

Monteith published nothing in his own lifetime, but he left a MS., which the Rev. Samuel Smith edited and published in 1841, in a small volume. He prefixed an unnecessarily long introduction, entitled, "Am I a Christian?" The actual MS. of Monteith runs to 52 pages, and Mr. Smith's introductory remarks occupy 52 more. Monteith's papers are entitled, the one, *A Testimony to the Free Grace of God*, being an account of his religious experiences ; the other, *Advices to my Children and Parishioners*, counsels on the religious life. The *Testimony* discloses a singularly simple-minded and even superstitious character. Written in the thirty-sixth year of his ministry, it recounts in general terms some of his pastoral trials and triumphs. The style is wonderfully clear and unassuming, and the whole little tract breathes a most fervent humility and piety. He discloses much regarding his own personal religious habits. He was, from an early age, given to

\* See, for an account of the Dyke Levellers, Nich. *Hist.*, II.



self-examination and secret prayer : attended church regularly, and read the "best books I could get ;" and had a strong desire to save souls. Like many earnest men of his strenuous time, he suffered "horrible temptations and suggestions most blasphemous" from Satan. Even as a school-boy, he was often "unreasonable, by stoppings in the way, and praying for help from the Lord." \* The day of his greatest blessing was March 30th, 1690—"that Sabbath evening, what light, life, and comfort, he was pleased to let out on my soul ! It was better to me than all things in the world, though it did not last long ; and perhaps all in consequence of my miscarriage and mismanagement of such a condescending love-visit from so great and so holy a majesty as the Lord is." † He complains of "Satan's injections of blasphemous thoughts," which, however, were succeeded by a marvellous vision about break of day, when "it pleased the Lord on a sudden to fill the room where I was alone, with such light, power, and presence, as I never felt the like before." ‡ But alas ! "on November 2nd, 1695, I was assailed by Satan with twelve different temptations." He resolved to go to bed. "I was scarcely entered the room, when I heard one whispering—'pray once more to the Lord before you go to bed, and speak no more' . . . no sooner was I on my knees, than an inexpressible power came on my soul, with light, life, and sweetness . . . also, my very body was strangely at ease." || The next scene has a strong touch of tragedy. "July 8th, 1706, being the Monday after the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Borgue, Ebenezer, then my only son, took ill. When I rose, I saw he was dying. I went into a chamber, leaving his mother and others with him. I cannot express, how it pleased a gracious Lord to show himself to my soul, there, with light, life, strength, and consolation ; clearing

\* P. 13.

† P. 24.

‡ P. 33.

|| P. 35, 36.

up to my soul, that he was my God in Christ, and the God of my seed for ever . . . and heaven came down as it were to my soul, with such light, power, and sense, that I had not room to receive more . . . I thought, if I had a son every day in my life afterwards to die, I could most easily part with them, and say most cheerfully, 'Lord, take them to thee, and a thousand blessings to thee for doing it!' I stayed a considerable time alone. I cannot tell how long it was, but when I came unto him, and saw he was near his end, I desired him to look to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. He observed me, though weak, and smiled; and in a moment after, he departed this life. In the meantime, my soul was so serene, and filled with joy and peace, that I had ado to keep myself from leaping in the room, and never had one moment of sorrow for his death, though he was gone in the sixth year of his age, and showed extraordinary capacity and fondness toward all that was good, and an abhorrence of all evil, and an only son, five dead before. This frame lasted some days." \*

One does not quite know whether to weep or to smile at a passage like this, of such mingled devotion and extravagance. Verily, Mr. Monteith's wits were, at times, perilously balanced. A "naturalistic" reader will be disposed to suggest, that such hysterical joy over the death of a beloved only son, "five dead before," was simply a violent reaction against terrible despair and grief. The father's heart and eye were still alert, however; he looked in the little childish face, he noted how the dying boy "observed" him, and "smiled," and "in a moment after, departed." And his heart was broken, though he "had ado" to keep himself "from leaping in the room." "*This frame lasted some days!*" Yes; and then came hours and days of dreadful sorrow, as violent as the unnatural joy.

\* P. 40, 41.

Monteith, after the fashion of the day among high and low, made a solemn "covenant" with God on June 22, 1696. The chief point in it, worthy of note, is his beseeching God to "break the power of sin in my soul, particularly the predominant sin, which, thou knowest, has given me many a sore heart; and keep me from being, in my day, a stain to religion in any way." \* This covenant he expressly renewed or "renovated" periodically before he celebrated the communion in Borgue, as well as at the sacramental "occasions" of other parishes. He specifies among such, a communion at Balmaghie House, probably during the time of the "parish schism," when the regular ministers could not obtain access to the parish church. The sole reference made by him to contemporary events, however, is contained in a single short paragraph, as follows:—

"In the year of God 1703, when things were like to go wrong as to religion in this land, I had many thoughtful hours about it, which did continue for some time. And especially in the year 1707, about the Union of these lands of Scotland and England. I could never think it consistent with the engagements Scotland was under, to consent that Prelacy should subsist in England, though I was fully convinced, that Church judicatories as such could do no more than they did in this matter. I must own, when the news of the Pretender's coming to sea was made known, that after several hours and several days were spent, I was assured in prayer he would not succeed in his undertaking . . . and accordingly preached, and wrote to some friends who doubted about it." †

The reference here to the year 1703 must be to the troubles with Macmillan; and Monteith's attitude towards the Union is that which the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, and Church courts generally, were obliged to adopt. The Union was felt to be a

\* *Testimony*, p. 42-44.

† P. 47, 48.

serious blow to the Scottish Covenant ; but, as he says : “ they could do no more than they did,” *i.e.*, record empty protests and resolutions.

So much for the more noteworthy members. A few sentences may be given to those who remain. THOMAS HAY of Anwoth, educated at Glasgow University, became minister in 1696. In 1711, he fell into great unpopularity and some degree of scandal, not unconnected with conviviality. A resignation was arranged and accepted in 1711, and he was succeeded by GEORGE GARTSHORE, son of James Gartshore of that Ilk. He in his turn, was called to succeed Cameron at Kirkcudbright, and his place was filled in 1724 by JOHN ENSLIE, who after a few months was translated to the Scotch Church at Rotterdam. Enslie served that church 34 years, and was then declared *emeritus*.

WILLIAM TOD of Buittle was a licentiate of the Presbytery of Hamilton, and was ordained to the parish in 1699. Although his name, along with that of John Reid of Carsphairn, will occur frequently in these pages, there is little known further regarding him, except that he died in 1735, after being for 37 years minister.

JOHN MURDOCH of Crossmichael was a Master of Arts of Edinburgh University, and died in August 1700, shortly before Macmillan received license. His successor was ROBERT GORDON, who died in 1722, aged 41. He was connected with the Kenmure family, and married a daughter of the then Viscount.

PATRICK JOHNSTON, of Girthon, was a Master of Arts of Edinburgh University. As we have seen, Macmillan was one of his elders for a short time, while chaplain to Murray of Broughton. He died in 1736, aged 63.

SAMUEL SPALDING, of Parton, was also an Edinburgh graduate. By birth an Irishman, he was yet of Scottish parentage. He married the heiress of Shirmers, and his lineal descendants

are in possession of the Holm estate. As we saw, he preached and presided at Macmillan's ordination.

The minister of Tongland was ROBERT BREDDAN or Bryden, ordained 1693; that of Twynholm was WILLIAM CLARK, ordained 1693, who in 1711 was succeeded by Andrew Boyd, a son of the Dalry minister.

The minister of Kelton was WILLIAM FALCONER.

The court which was to deal with Macmillan consisted of the above fifteen members. I subjoin the list at one view, for the sake of clearness, and placing the parishes in the order of sederunt observed in the Presbytery at that time. This, as it will be seen, was not alphabetical, or according to ordination, but apparently regulated by geographical position.

THE PRESBYTERY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT, ANNO 1703.

1.	Carsphairn,	-	John Reid, A.M.,	- -	ordained	1694.
2.	Dalry,	- - -	William Boyd,	- - -	„	1690.
3.	Balmacellan,	-	Thomas Warner,	- - -	„	1657.
4.	Parton,	- - -	Samuel Spalding, A.M. (Edin.),			1692?
5.	Crossmichael	-	Robert Gordon,	- - -	ordained	1702.
6.	Kelton,	- - -	William Falconer,	- -	„	1695.
7.	Buittle,	- - -	William Tod,	- - - -	„	1699.
8.	Rerrick,	- -	Alexander Telfair, A.M.			
			(Edin.),	- - - -	„	1689.
9.	Kirkcudbright,		Andrew Cameron,	- -	„	1689.
10.	Tongland,	- -	Robert Bryden,	- - -	„	1693.
11.	Twynholm,	-	William Clark,	- - -	„	1693.
12.	Borgue,	- -	James Monteith,	- - -	„	1692.
13.	Girthon,	- -	Patrick Johnston, A.M.			
			(Edin.),	- - - -	„	1699.
14.	Anwoth,	- -	Thomas Hay,	- - - -	„	1696.
15.	Balmaghie,-	-	John Macmillan, A.M.			
			(Edin.),	- - - -	„	1701.
16.	Kells,	- - -	Andrew Ewart, A.M. (Edin.),	„		1691.

From the above, it appears that the "Father" of the Presbytery was Warner of Balmaclellan, and the youngest members were Macmillan and Gordon of Crossmichael. It is noteworthy that there are no fewer than five graduates of Edinburgh University.

## CHAPTER V.

1700.

### MEETINGS AND MANNERS.

Presbytery Records—Last Bishop of Galloway—The Synod of Galloway—Presbytery Meetings monthly—*Sessio secunda*—Places of Meeting—Clachanpluck—Privy censures—"Opening and adding"—Attendance compulsory—References from Sessions—The Greater Excommunication—Visitations—"Slaves"—"Papists"—Schools—Bridges—Corresponding members—"Common heads"—Presbytery dinners—Social status of presbyters—Their marriages—Dress and manners—Simplicity and eccentricity—Semple of Carsphairn—Nathaniel M'Kie.

THE minutes of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright do not begin till April 30, 1700, and it may be assumed that the earlier records from 1690 are lost. The Synod of Galloway met at Minnigaff on May 14, 1689, to knit up the ravelled affairs of its diocese. It found many parishes without ministers, and the supply of qualified men was not at first equal to the demand. A number of ministers "from Ireland" were present, of whom some received calls to parishes within the bounds of the Synod. Thus, John M'Bride was called to the parish of Bogue, but he did not long continue, since we have seen that Monteith entered on his office as minister there in 1692.

The last Bishop of Galloway was John Gordon, son of John Gordon of Caldwells, in Ellon. He was descended from the Haddo family, and had been a chaplain in the Royal Navy, and afterwards to the King. He secured his bishopric by the influence of the Earl of Melfort. When James VII. deserted

the throne, Gordon also fled from Scotland. Afterwards, he went in the King's train to Ireland, where he was appointed Chancellor of Dublin. When the Irish bubble burst, he retired to St. Germain's, where he used to read the English liturgy in his own lodging to such as came. About 1702, he went to Rome and made a solemn recantation before Cardinal Sacripante. He received the tonsure from Pope Clement XI., assuming the additional name of Clement. The four lesser orders he received from Cardinal Casoni. The Pope now granted him a pension and the honorary title of Abbot. He died at Rome in 1726, aged about 83, having survived all the other deprived bishops.

Such was the chequered story of the bishop, whose late diocese was henceforward to be ruled by a Synod of Presbyters. The parishes of the Synod were gradually supplied with Presbyterian ministers. In Kirkcudbright Presbytery there appears to have been a clean sweep of the obnoxious "curates" in 1689, and no troubles were experienced there, as in some other districts, from the presence of clergy of the prelatic type.

We have already commented on the individual members of the Presbytery, and it may now be interesting and useful to observe the Presbytery at its ordinary work.

The meetings were usually held once a month, at either the beginning or the end of the month as agreed upon. The meeting frequently covered two days, owing to the mass of business and the tedious forms observed. Sometimes there was a *sessio secunda* on the same day, generally at 5 P.M. The morning sitting began commonly at 9 A.M. The Presbytery did not scruple to sit very late, sometimes into the early hours of the morning, in order to complete an important case. The places of meeting varied constantly, although Kirkcudbright was the ordinary seat. As Presbyterian visitations were then frequent, meetings might be held in any parish church or at any point in







CLACHANLUCK, NOW LAURIESTON.

a parish. Next to Kirkcudbright, the most frequent point of concentration was Clachanpluck, or its neighbouring localities, Polsack and Cullenoch. The tradition is, that such meetings were held in the change-house or inn of the place.

The village presented an unusual scene of bustle and animation on a "Presbytery day," for the clergymen rode in on horseback, accompanied in many cases by their elders or by servants. In days when newspapers were hardly known, and communication was difficult, the assembling of the clergy from all parts of the county must have brought a considerable amount of excitement and talk along with it. The fact that Balmaghie was so often visited, and was in a sense a Presbytery seat, made that parish all the more liable to presbyterial supervision. And it put the brethren in a better position to hear and see what was going on, whether, to their mind, right or wrong.

Presbyterial rules were very strict. Members were required to attend every meeting, or else to give in a valid excuse. Absence from two or three meetings was made the subject of special inquiry, and sometimes of censure and warning. At intervals, the brethren met "for prayer and privy censures." On these occasions a full attendance was insisted on, and the procedure was, that first "severals of them were nominat to pray *per vices*." Then inquiry was made if the members had the Acts of Assembly, and if any special Act (*e.g.*, against profaneness) had been duly read from the pulpit. After these preliminaries, the real and delicate work of "privy censures" began. The brethren were "removed *per vices*, and returning, were commended, exhorted, and admonished, as there was found cause." \* This custom, whether for good or ill, has become obsolete in the Church. And there are obvious difficulties in the way of restoring it. One can only regret that the

\* Presb. Rec., *passim*.

kindly custom of *commending* a deserving brother should have lapsed, making the pastoral life so depressing as it sometimes becomes, in the absence of authoritative approval and praise.

On ordinary occasions the meetings began with prayer, and thereafter a member, previously chosen, "opened and added in the ordinary" on a text of Scripture. This mystic phrase simply means that such member gave an exposition of the passage, and then added a theological or dogmatic application, which the Presbytery approved or challenged, as they saw proper.

The next thing done was to consider the absentees from last meeting, and their excuses; and this applied to representative elders as well as to ministers.

Then came what, unfortunately, was the staple business—discipline cases referred from Kirk Sessions, of which, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was an alarming list. This frequent reference to the Presbytery seems to have arisen from the parties in fault desiring to be purged by an oath from their scandal. Such oath, however, could not legally or prudently be given or taken without the Presbytery's approval. And it was never permitted except after every other means had been used to ascertain the truth.

Disobedience to the orders of the Kirk Session also furnished a large crop of references. Parties confessing sins were frequently directed to stand in the "public place of repentance, wearing the habit of sackcloth," for one or more Sundays, and to receive public rebuke from the pulpit. This was called "satisfying the Session," and when it was spread over several Sundays, the parties were said to be "going on in satisfaction." Failing obedience, the Sessions appealed to the Presbytery, who cited the contumacious, sent committees to confer with such as failed to appear, and if necessary, pronounced sentence of the *greater excommunication* against them. The greater excommunication was a censure which could be inflicted only by the Presbytery.

The lesser consisted in suspension from the sacraments, and was in the power of the Kirk Session.

When any one was condemned to suffer the greater excommunication, the Presbytery directed the minister first to deliver three "public admonitions," on three several Sundays, with a Presbytery meeting intervening between them, so that this process alone might cover a space of three months. Then, if the person continued stubborn, there followed three solemn public prayers, covering another interval of three months. Last of all, if these efforts failed, the dreaded sentence was passed by the Presbytery after prayer. The minister was required to intimate it from the pulpit, and solemnly offering prayer for the offender, to declare him cast out of the Church and delivered over to Satan. Even at the last moment, however, signs of penitence in the offender entitled the minister to withhold the final doom.

To us, reading such ancient records, the question arises, What gave such weight to these spiritual decrees? The answer is grimly expressed in the Form of Process:—"The people are to be warned, that they hold the person to be cast out of the communion of the Church, and that they shun all unnecessary converse with him or her; nevertheless, excommunication dissolveth not the bonds of civil or natural relations, or exempts from the duties belonging to them."\*

The greater excommunication, therefore, made a man or woman a boycotted person, and reduced him to the society of his own home. He became a spiritual pariah, with whom no "unnecessary converse" must be held. He was "delivered over to Satan," and in a rude and superstitious age such a doom seemed worse than death.

The Presbytery did not scruple to make free use of this terrible weapon against offenders in high places. Humbler

\* *Form of Process*, c. viii., sect. 17.

sinners, as a rule, broke down and submitted while the slow torture of "admonitions" and "prayers" was going on.

When all the repulsive work of discipline was finished, the Presbytery took other business. As ecclesiastical buildings gradually fell into decay, there came a frequent necessity for visitations of manses and churches. The Presbytery was the court of decision for such causes, and the usual rule was to summon respectable tradesmen to depone on oath what repairs were needed, and how much they would cost. The needful sum was then ordered to be paid by the heritors to the minister.

At an ordinary diet of Presbyterial visitation, the custom was that, after sermon, the minister, elders, and people were severally "called in," and questioned on various points. For example, the minister was asked if his people kept family worship: the elders in turn were asked if their minister kept family worship. The people were next interrogated as to their pastor's diligence in visiting and preaching. The answers were regularly minuted, and the Presbytery expressed approval, or administered advice and censure, according to circumstances.

Macmillan, in his "Narrative," has shortly expressed the gist of such visitations, in the following quaint sentences:—"There was nought like a visitation observed, either with the people or yet with him. For they were never inquired at, how they pleased either his doctrine or walk, and if he was diligent in his pastoral duties; neither did they inquire at him how he pleased the people."\*

As in the present day, so then, occasional items of special business were dealt with as they came up. One, which occurs several times at this period, refers to a collection appointed by the General Assembly "for those taken captives by the Turks."

\* See Appendix. "Pleased," of course, means "pleased with."

Another concerns "papists," of whom lists were given in by the respective ministers, and Cameron was appointed to submit these to the quarterly meeting of the Commission in Edinburgh. The laws were strict against such, and the Presbytery more than once dealt with them, with a view to inducing them to conform to the Church.

For example, Warner and Macmillan were deputed to deal with the "papists" in the parish of Parton, in conjunction with the parish minister, "for their conversion and reclaiming." Special attention was directed to "apostates," *i.e.*, such as had fallen away from the Reformed doctrine.\* It is a little staggering, at first, to find the same reverend body, which appointed a committee to lay the Ringcroft ghost, dealing at some length, and with a degree of severity, with a poor "papist" who was found using a "monument of idolatry." For so the Presbytery styled the crucifix.

Education was also under Presbyterial care. It is recorded that several parishes, of which Balmaghie was one, had no funds for a schoolmaster's salary. They were directed to take steps to secure these with all speed. This matter became afterwards a query in the Presbyterial visitations.

It was in keeping with the old union of offices implied in the name of *Pontifex*, that the Presbytery should see that the Synodical collection, appointed for building "a bridge over the Water of Dee," was duly made in all the parishes. †

In those days, Presbyteries appointed "correspondents" as Synods still do. These were directed to attend neighbouring Presbyteries, which in their turn commissioned some of their body to sit with the "corresponding" Courts. Sometimes such neighbourly help was expressly asked for. The Presbytery of Wigtown, for instance, requested that two or three members

\* Presb. Rec., Dec. 9, 1701.

† Presb. Rec., Dec. 15, 1702.

might be sent from Kirkcudbright to "correspond" with them, and Cameron, Ewart, and Monteith were accordingly sent.\* We shall afterwards see that two correspondents from Wigtown sat at Macmillan's deposition.

Before leaving the subject, it may be mentioned that two important questions long occupied the Presbytery's attention. One was the subscription to the Confession of Faith, which was required of all ministers and elders. The other was the subscription to the "covenanted work of Reformation."† It was indeed an age of oaths and signatures, and much time and suffering were to be expended in growing out of these swaddling-clothes.

With all its antiquated forms and narrow views (as they seem to us now), the Presbytery was a hard-working and conscientious body. And it paid a laudable attention to the theological studies becoming a learned ministry. A list of "common heads," or theses, was early drawn up, containing points not already "handled" by the Presbytery. These were discussed in Latin by the members appointed at the beginning of the Presbytery's diet. It is interesting to learn that such high and weighty themes as Free Will, The Holy Trinity, Faith and Works, the Person of Christ, were debated in an ancient tongue by this gathering of country ministers. It may be doubted whether many similar assemblies of Presbyters to-day could "handle" such a knotty point as this, assigned to Telfair, the ghost-layer :—*De concursu Dei cum causis secundis, particulari, simultaneo, et praevio*. Or this, confided to Clark of Twynholm :—*De unitate et identitate foederis gratiae, quoad substantiam, in utroque Testamento*. Amid their variegated duties, these old world ministers never quite forgot that they ought still to be students of theology and philosophy. The very minute of Macmillan's deposition closes with a reminder that, "at the

\* Pres. Rec., Dec. 15, 1702.

† Pres. Rec., Nov. 19, 1702.



next," Mr. Cameron is to "have his common head, *De viribus liberi arbitrii*." \*

At the close of the Presbytery meetings, the brethren doubtless dined together in a genial and brotherly way. Such Presbytery dinners attained their height after an ordination service. In the *Fasti*, there is preserved the following account of sums "debursed at the moderation of the call, and at his ordination." (The ordination was that of John Reid's son and successor in Carsphairn):—

" <i>Imprimis</i> to the Presbytery Clerk at the moderation as			
	his due, ... ..	£3	0 0
do.,	to John Paterson in Knockgray, for meal for		
	the ordination dinner, ... ..	5	8 0
do.,	to John Hair in Holm, for a boll of malt to		
	the said ordination dinner, ... ..	9	0 0
do.,	to the said John Hair, a Wether and a Lamb		
	he furnished for the said occasion, ...	5	0 0
do.,	to Hugh M'Hutcheson in Lamloch for a Wether,	3	12 0
do.,	to George Stevenson for a Lamb, ... ..	1	13 0
do.,	to Mr. M'Myne in Damelintoun, for Flour		
	and Baking on said occasion, ... ..	1	14 0."

The total is alarming, being £30 7s. But let the reader remember to divide by *twelve*, as it is Scots money! The Presbytery dined, in true Galloway fashion, on mutton and oat-cakes. The proportion of meal to malt seems a Scottish counterpart to Falstaff's bread and sack.

The social standing of the Presbyters of those days was, relatively, very much higher than at present. They were practically the only learned men, sometimes the only educated men, in their parishes. They were by far the most cultured and civilised. The country gentlemen were little better than rough farmers, who lived on their own mutton, and brewed their own

\* Pres. Rec., Dec. 29, 1703.

ale, and whose standard of morals was not high or nice. Profane language was extremely common. Wodrow preserves a reminiscence of Lining's, that Lord Jedburgh "told Shields, in Flanders, that his first check arose from his little girl, two years old. Her mother had taught her 'Ill, lying, and banning bairns would goe to hell.' Hearing her father cursing, the child said:

" 'Papa, banning bairns goe to hell!'"

" 'Ay, but my bairn, I am not a bairn, but a muckle man.'" "

" 'Muckle banning men will get a muckle hell!'" \*

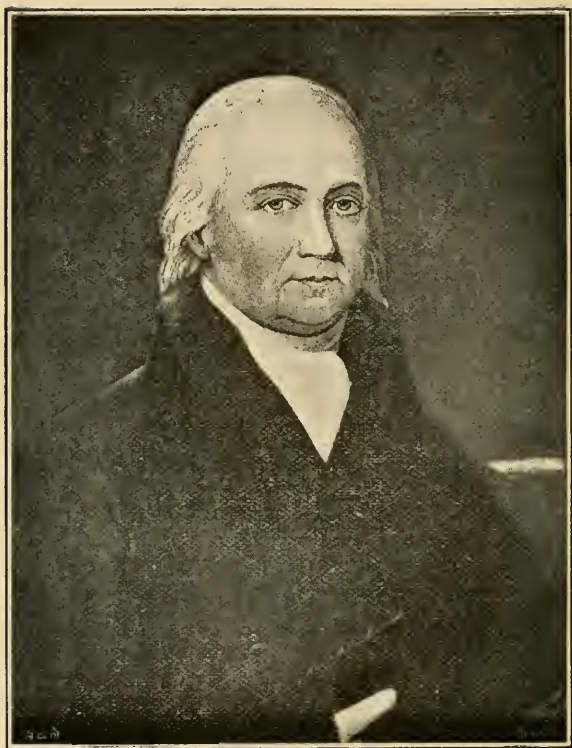
Among a gentry of this rough and unpolished sort, a college-bred and Christian gentleman shone without effort. The drunkenness which prevailed among the country lairds also distinguished them from the clergy, who were necessarily examples of sobriety.

The ministers met the "county people" on equal, if not often superior ground. Their incomes were as good, or even better. Their sacred authority was such, that the highest might well respect it in their persons. We may pardonably quote the matrimonial alliances as a sure index to the social rank of the clergy in 1700. For instance, Gordon of Crossmichael married a daughter of Viscount Kenmure: Ewart of Kells married "the heiress of Capenoch;" Spalding of Parton, "the heiress of Shirmers." Macmillan's second wife was the daughter of Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlston, and widow of Edward Goldie of Craigmuaie. M'Kie, his colleague and successor, married a daughter of Nathaniel Gordon of Carleton in Borgue. Many modern Galloway families of the county descend from these old parish ministers. The Johnstons of Carnsalloch, for example, are descended from Johnston of Girthon.

The reader might be apt to suppose, because these clergymen lived in thatched houses, ate *braxy*, and drank muddy ale, that

\* Wodrow, *Analecta*, Vo'. II.





JOHN MACMILLAN OF SANDHILLS.

they were men of uncourtly ways and rude exterior. A glance at any clerical portrait of the period will dispel this delusion. The fine portrait of Thomas Boston of Ettrick, prefixed to Dr. Andrew Thomson's life of that worthy, may be taken as a contemporary type, since Boston lived and laboured exactly at this time. The clean-shaven face (for beards were then unknown among the clergy), the spotless bands and ruffles, the carefully curled hair, down to the ring on the little finger of the right hand, shew us a very fine gentleman indeed, much more elaborately dressed than the rough and ready country parson of to-day. The tradition is, that Macmillan also was such a figure, very courteous and polished in manner, and of a stately form. Unfortunately, no portrait is known to exist. But his son John Macmillan of Sandhills, as figured in his portrait, is just such another as Thomas Boston, in outward appearance. The sole relic of Macmillan's outward array, which has come down to us, is a massive and beautiful seal, which he doubtless wore at his fob. It is of the purest gold, and bears his coat of arms (lion rampant), his crest (two-handed sword), and his motto, *Miseris succurrere disco*. Such an article belonged to no country boor or rough vulgarian. And tradition has reached me of the costly and well-nigh imperishable silken fabrics, in which Mrs. Macmillan the third robed herself. Such details are not beneath notice, since they help to correct a wrong impression, and at the same time bring the personality of the men more vividly before us.

With all this, the clergy of the day were, beyond doubt, a strange mixture of dignity and simplicity, amounting at times to broad eccentricities of manner and conduct. This is best illustrated from the anecdotes of John Semple of Carsphairn, preserved in Patrick Walker's life-like pages. I may be permitted to quote a few passages of special and curious interest:—

“When he was going to the ford in the water of Dee, on his way to the Presbytery, he would not be hindered from riding the water, though he was told by some that the water was unpassable, saying, ‘I must get through, if the Lord will; I am going about his work.’ He entered in, and the strength of the water carried him and his horse beneath the ford. He fell from his horse, and stood up in the water, and taking off his hat prayed a word to this purpose, ‘Lord, art thou in earnest to drown me thy poor servant, who would fain go thy errands?’ After which, he and his horse both got safely out, to the admiration of all onlookers.

“When a neighbouring minister was distributing tokens before the Sacrament, Mr. Semple, standing by and seeing the minister reaching a token to a woman, said—‘Hold your hand! That woman hath got too many already, for she is a witch;’ of which none suspected her then. Yet afterwards, she confessed herself to be a witch, and was burned for the same.”

The incident before the Privy Council has already been narrated. The sequel is given in Patrick Walker’s words:—

“After this he went home, and entered his pulpit. He said, ‘I parted o’er easily with thee, which has been many a sore heart to me; but I shall hing by the wicks of thee now!’ . . . He died with much assurance of heaven . . . under great impressions of dreadful judgments to come on these covenanted lands, especially on Scotland, and the west and south thereof, above all other places, by the bloody sword of Popish and others taking part with them: repeating these words three times over, ‘A Bloody Sword for Scotland!’”\*

Another quotation, this time from the *Fasti*,† will help to deepen our impression of the simple, and even eccentric, manners of the Scottish parochial clergy in the eighteenth century. It refers to Nathaniel M’Kie, Gordon’s successor in Crossmichael, and a son of M’Kie of Balmaghie. He was accustomed to make interjections during his reading of Scripture, and here is one specimen, often quoted:—

\* See *Biographia Presbyteriana*.

† Vol. II., under *Crossmichael*.

“*And the Lord said unto Moses*—sneck that door; I’m thinking, if ye had to sit beside the door yersel, ye wadna be sae ready leaving it open! It was juist beside that door, that Yedam Tamson the bellman gat his deith o’ cauld, and I’m sure, honest man, he didna let it stay muckle open. *And the Lord said unto Moses*—I see a man aneath that laft wi’ his hat on. I’m sure ye’re clear o’ the soogh o’ the door. Keep aff yer bannet, Tammas, and if yer bare pow be cauld, ye maun just get a grey worsit wig like mysel’; they’re no sae dear—plenty o’ them at Rob Gillespie’s for tenpence!”

Nathaniel M’Kie is said to have written the song—“Nae dominies for me, laddie!” Altogether, he gives us a refreshing picture of the homely Scottish parson, perfectly unaffected yet a gentleman all the time: speaking pure “Galloway Scots,” as Macmillan himself spoke and even wrote it: a being very Scotch, and very human.

## CHAPTER VI.

1701-1703.

### STORM.

Macmillan visits and catechises the parish—His sermons—His pastoral work—Communion seasons—“Purleycueing”—Tokens—“Macmillan’s cup”—“Fencing the tables”—Baptism—Macmillan a popular minister—His first attendance on the Presbytery—Scandalous lairds—A day of fasting—Death of King William—The oath of allegiance—Another fast—Overtures to the Assembly against Episcopacy—First dissension—Macmillan announces his separation—Tod and Reid join him—The “Grievances” given in—A committee to answer them.

THE first business of a country pastor, after his ordination, is to visit every house in his parish. This duty Macmillan performed in the autumn of 1701, and probably he combined with it the catechising of his people, a custom then in full force. Boston of Ettrick added public catechising at the evening service;\* but in Balmaghie no evening service could be held, because of the distances to be traversed by the bulk of the people.

The morning and evening prayers of a clergyman’s house were in those days semi-public, and may be regarded as constituting a daily service. This part of his duty Macmillan discharged with relish and zeal. As we have seen, even before his ordination he had a “name of piety in the bounds.”† The new minister for a time pursued his calling quietly, preaching, visiting, celebrating the sacraments, and taking part in what

\* *Boston of Ettrick*, p. 65, 103.

† *Examination*, p. 43.



were then styled "church judicatories." Of his pulpit style and matter, there remains only one specimen, preserved in the Auchensaugh tract, to be fully dealt with in a separate chapter.\* The custom then was to choose some fruitful text, and labour it for several Sundays together. Thus we read that at the Visitation in 1703, "he preached upon his ordination text, which he had been upon for some Sabbaths before, Psalm 62, 8th verse, '*Trust in Him at all times, ye people,*' etc." This was not the text of the sermon preached at his ordination, but that of his own first sermon as minister of the parish, September 18, 1701.† It need hardly be said that "preaching" meant speaking without book, as it does still in Galloway.

"Is he a reader?" is often asked regarding a minister. The answer is at first startling :

"No, no ; he is nae reader. He *preaches* every word !"

The length of sermons was much in excess of modern measure, and there was generally a prelude in the shape of what was called a *lecture*, being the "opening and adding" in which the Presbytery so constantly exercised its clerical members. This custom persisted till a recent date. The present writer, preaching as a candidate on the very ground where Macmillan walked, was required to give both lecture and sermon, making about fifty minutes of discourse. In 1701, the total space spent in speaking must have been as great, and probably much greater. I should estimate the length of Macmillan's sermon on ordinary Sundays at an hour at least. With the lecture added, his hearers endured perhaps an hour and a half of exhortation. And tradition has it, that two hours was no uncommon allowance. There were, however, mitigating features, such as weak human nature demands. It was not unusual for people to come and go during the sermon. And every little

\* See chap. xi.

† See contemporary MS.

parish church had, quite near to it, a place of refreshment, not uncalled for in districts where men came long distances to service. Hill Burton\* describes the young lairds and peasantry as retiring to such modest hostelrys, after the service was concluded, in order to discuss the sermon or the newest scandal. In the tiny "Kirk Clachan," now called Shankfoot, there was then the unfailing "alehouse"; and we cannot doubt that, spite of the Synod's fulminations against "untimeous drinking," there was a brisk trade done every week.

Macmillan preached in tolerably broad Scotch, not scrupling to use such words as *brave*, and the vernacular *thir* for *these*. It was the common speech of his class and of the best Scottish society. We can see, from the remains of his printed work, that he had a style of his own, reflecting the rude energy and quick wit of his former companions in the farm and sheepfold. The chief feature of its substance is the wealth of Scriptural reference, especially to the Old Testament. He was fond of analogies and illustrations, whether from history or daily life. The interminable divisions and sub-divisions of his "Narrative," and of the Auchensaugh sermon, were not peculiar to him. They were in the fashion of his day, and by no means wearisome to his regular hearers. To a country congregation, minute division is still acceptable, because it breaks up the solid mass, and enables an unaccustomed mind to take it in piecemeal. The ingenious author of *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* has cleverly shewn how a rustic memory grasps the "heads" of a discourse.†

As a pastor, Macmillan was quite at home. He was a Galloway man among Galloway folk. He spoke the same tongue, knew the same life of hardship and rough brotherhood, and was in fact a "countryman" with a college education. He was no mere clodhopper, however, but the social equal of his "heritors,"

\* *History*, vol. viii.

† See *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*.

and the superior of most of them in station, morals, and information. His chief work lay in Clachanpluck, among the villagers, but many a round would be made, on foot, or riding a rough pony, through the "farm-towns" and to the distant shepherds' cottages. At this time, his duty took him frequently to Balmaghie Place, as it was then generally called. For its owner lay under heavy censure, and the Presbytery held him in an unrelenting grip. As the minister went about, he catechised the people in groups, summoning all and sundry to attend his "diet" at some central spot. The custom still prevailed as late as 1840, but its only survival now is a common jest about the "carritches." Throughout his visitation, there was incessant prayer. Prayer indeed was the distinguishing feature of a clergyman. The cottagers still say, "It is nae veesit without a prayer."

In his domiciliary work, Macmillan kept a watchful guard over his people's morals. The tone was sufficiently low, and scandals were sadly abundant. It does not seem to have struck the clergy of that time, that the housing of the poor was a frequent cause of trouble. Sanitary ideas were still in their infancy. In any outbreak of moral or physical disease, the Presbytery thought only of prayer and fasting, when it might have been better at the same time to set about sweeping and cleaning and other wholesome works. A pastoral letter was the shot fired at intemperance or immorality, when a police court would have done more to check the vice. A solemn fast, with long sermons and prayers, was the weapon with which the old world clergy fought a fever or "pest." We should still, perhaps, at present, have the religious function. Most certainly, however, we should fight the enemy with medical skill and sanitary appliances.

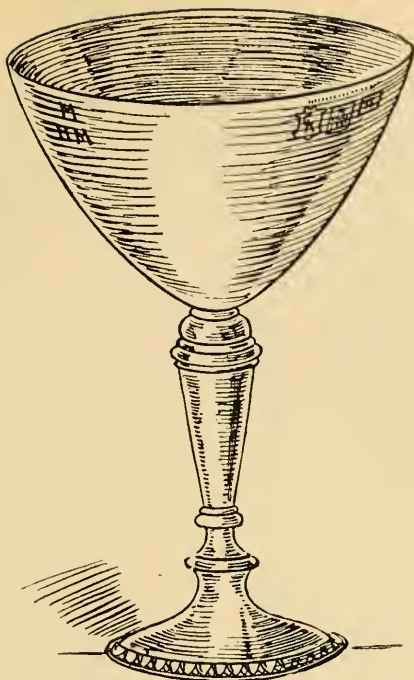
Macmillan at communion seasons was transfigured, and became a veritable high-priest. It is difficult for a degenerate age to realise the "Holy Fair" of the old Scottish Church. The

Holy Communion, as a rule, was celebrated on some bright summer or autumn day. In Balmaghie, it was the second Sunday of July, or as near to it as possible. From all parts of the parish, and from neighbouring parishes as well, the people flocked to the church. It was something like a Scottish "Holy Week." The "work" began on the Thursday, and was not concluded till the following Monday. The minister of the parish called to his aid several of his brethren, who preached in turn. He himself preached the "action" sermon, a discourse delivered just before the sacrament was celebrated. And he gave a concluding sermon on the Monday, summing up the various instructions of the whole "occasion." This was known quite recently as *purleycueing*.\*

Tokens were given out on the Saturday to such as applied for them, and were not under scandal. Macmillan's tokens were lost when Dr. Martin became minister at the end of 1768; but Mr. Burns, the learned author of the volume on *Scottish Communion Plate*, has fortunately recovered one specimen, which has been added to the collection in the General Assembly's library. The Communion cups were those given in Hew M'Ghie's ministry, and are still in good condition after well-nigh 300 years. At what time Macmillan's celebrations of this sacrament became specially associated with deep solemnity and conviction of sin, it is impossible to say now. But the tradition is, that none who was unworthy could look on "Macmillan's Cup" without plain tokens of guilty confusion. The lines in Nicholson's "Brownie of Blednoch" are well-known:—

" But he slade ay awa' or the sun was up,  
He ne'er could look straught on Macmillan's cup."

\* The word is a corruption of *pour la queue*. Dugald Williamson of Tongland was in his time reckoned the best *purleycueing* member of the Presbytery.



MACMILLAN'S CUP (SHOWING HALL MARKS) AND SEAL.



This poem appeared in the *Dumfries Monthly Magazine* for October, 1825, with a note on these lines by the author as follows:—"This cup was treasured by a zealous disciple in the parish of Kirkcowan, and long used as a test by which to ascertain the orthodoxy of suspected persons."

No trace exists of a Kirkcowan cup, and I assume that Macmillan, in his Communion service at Auchensaugh, used one or both of the Balmaghie cups.

The tradition preserved in Nicholson's lines indicates the profound awe and stern gravity which were soon noted as qualities of his sacramental occasions. The strictness with which he "fenced the tables," and boldly "debarred" from Communion such as he deemed unworthy, was afterwards illustrated at Auchensaugh, where he "debarred" the Queen, the Parliament, and the ministers of the Established Church.

It is likely, that Macmillan's Communions soon attracted large numbers of the neighbouring people. In a later time, "Tongland Sacrament" became similarly frequented, and it is said that servants, at hiring fairs, long made it a condition that they should be free to attend either "Tongland Sacrament" or Keltonhill Fair.

It is worth remarking, that the old custom of "fencing the tables" was far from being formal or unnecessary, when so many strangers and outsiders attended the celebrations. At present, communion rolls are carefully kept, and few "guests," as a rule, participate in the rite. It has become a congregational function, pure and simple. But in that time, men and women trudged weary miles to be present at a favourite "Sacrament," and hence discipline had to be exercised in the mass, by such general "debarrings" as were then practised. A vast deal of inter-parochial life has been lost through the passing away of the old custom of great Communion gatherings. Doubtless, abuses crept in, as Burns's "Holy Fair" illustrates



so unsparingly. But ministers and people from various parishes met in fellowship, now hardly known at all.

The other sacrament recognised by the Church, that of baptism, was usually administered in the sacred building, although nowadays such a thing is hardly ever seen. Macmillan's own children were baptised "on the Lord's Day, in the presence of the congregation, the mother presenting."\* No font was in existence in 1768, when it is minuted that "there is no Bason for Baptism."† As I write, I remember that still there is "no Bason." For baptism is universally in private houses, and the water is taken from an ordinary bowl.

Macmillan's relations with his people, in all the foregoing pastoral duties, were from the first most cordial and harmonious. His call had been unanimous, and with this good beginning he went on happily. The first storm in his otherwise peaceful ministry came from the outside, and was brewed in those "church judicatories" which it was an essential part of his duty to attend regularly.

As we have seen, Macmillan took his seat as a member of the Presbytery on December 24th, 1700. He was the representative or "ruling" elder from the parish of Girthon. He sat again on March 18th, 1701, when Kells was re-annexed, and Mr. Ewart, his old minister, once more became a member of the Court. The same day, M'Ghie of Balmaghie compeared and confessed his grievous sins. In addition to a darker scandal, these included "his extravagancies in swearing and drinking." Cameron was appointed to rebuke him publicly before the congregation in six weeks' time, in the usual manner, *i.e.*, the culprit appearing in the "place of repentance," and dressed in the "habit of sackcloth." M'Ghie was called in, and the Moderator read this sentence and "did gravely rebuke him."

\* See flyleaf.

† See Sess. Minute Book, 1768.



Immediately before this, another M'Ghie, the laird of Slogarie, in Balmaghie, was dealt with in absence, and warned that, unless he submitted, he would be excommunicated. As Macmillan was then frequently "supplying" the pulpit of Balmaghie, he may have had to read the citation and warning to this gentleman. It may be imagined what condition of things prevailed when two leading gentlemen of the parish were thus outcasts from the Church.

Macmillan now ceased to appear as an elder, because he was on "trials" for his ordination, which took place on September 18th, 1701. He attended every succeeding meeting, and as early as December 9th, he was chosen to act as clerk till next meeting of Synod. The minutes after this date are frequently in his handwriting, even after he ceased to be the official secretary. The custom was, apparently, to employ the youngest ordained member, except in delicate and difficult matters. But sometimes it happened that one hand wrote the scroll minute and another engrossed it in the Presbytery's book. It does not appear that any fee was paid for such labour.

On January 7, 1702, a day of public fasting was appointed, and a statement of the "causes of the Fast" is engrossed. These throw light on the moral and religious condition of the district. Among other causes, are mentioned "gross ignorance," "neglect of the duties of godliness in secret, private, and public," the "manifold witchcrafts," and the "great neglect of evidencing faithfulness and zeal against such hellish wickedness." Much emphasis is laid on the "idolatrous popery in the land." The "dreadful breach" of the "Covenants, National and Solemn League," is deplored. Reference is made to "profane cursing, swearing, and banning," as a prevalent vice: as also to "murders, whereof some are unnatural, uncleanness of all sorts, fornication, adultery, midst tippling, drunkenness, and revelling, oppression, cheating, and defect of considerateness in dealing and bargain-

ing . . . lying, slandering, backbiting," and other such sins. The "barbarous, hellish, and cruel persecution" is also roundly denounced. Sabbath-breaking by drinking assemblies and neglect of church attendance: disobedience to parents; and coldness and "barrenness" under Gospel ordinances are set forth as crying evils. Finally, a long paragraph sets forth the "fearfull incrotchments" made by Erastianism, and the supineness of "church officers" under these, which, "though not matter of separation, is yet reckoned matter of lamentation." The picture is a dark one, but the Presbytery and Session Records of the time shew that it was also a true one. Child-murder, in particular, was dreadfully common. At the meeting immediately previous, Macmillan, along with Cameron and Monteith, had been assigned the sad duty of being present with a poor unfortunate, called Marion Daa, a former parishioner of Balmaghie, lying under sentence of death in the Kirkcudbright Tolbooth, for "murthering of her child, which was unlawfully begotten." \*

But the crowning grievance in this curious list of "causes" was evidently the "incrotchments." In the light of the events which followed so swiftly, one might suppose that Macmillan, Reid, and Tod had a share in drafting this and some other parts of the manifesto. It was not so, however. The document was the joint production of Cameron, Telfair, Monteith, and Clark. It is significant, that they describe the "Erastianism" of the Church as being "not matter of separation." For here, was just the point at which issue was soon to be joined in the Presbytery.

Meantime, harmony still prevailed outwardly, and all the brethren reported at next meeting that they had kept the Fast in their parishes. The growing uneasiness at "encroachments"

\* Presb. Rec., December 9th, 1701. They accordingly were present at the execution.

is seen in the overtures sent up from the Presbytery by their commissioners, who were Warner, Spalding, and Johnston. The Presbytery overtured the Assembly to declare the *jus divinum* of Presbyterianism, and the "intrinsic power" of the Church to hold her Assemblies and other judicatories. They suggested that the Covenants should be renewed. They also called for the suppression of witchcraft, and of two dark sins, adultery and incest, which they describe as "abounding in the land." Finally, they demand the energetic enforcement of the laws against Popery and Quakerism.

Macmillan took part in the ordination of Gordon to Cross-michael at the next meeting, April 8, 1702. At the same meeting, the Assembly members gave in their report. They had given in the overtures, above mentioned, to the Committee on Overtures; but "nothing was concluded anent them, in regard the Assembly rose suddenly, because the king was then reported to be at the point of death." William died on March 28th, and this minute faithfully reflects the panic and agitation into which his death threw the Church. All thought of *jus divinum* or intrinsic right, or "renewing" of the Covenants were driven out by the political crisis. The hopes of men like Macmillan, who had entered the ministry in the expectation of obtaining reforms, were instantly discouraged, and finally blasted.

It was known that the new Queen was strongly biassed in favour of the Episcopalians, and the Presbyterian Establishment again hung in the balance. It must always be remembered, that large masses of the people were still Episcopalian, and in probably not less than 200 parishes, "curates" still held the benefices and ministered religion.\* There was also a certain residuum of the old Roman Church, figuring incessantly as

\* At the Union in 1707, there were 165 "curates" in livings. See Cunningham, I., 196.

"Papists" in the Presbytery records. The accession of a daughter of James VII., the author of the hated "Toleration," was well fitted to cause alarm. At such a time, no thought could be spared for constitutional reforms. Bare existence was at stake, and the Assembly dispersed in some disorder, no man being sure of the next step.

The main apprehension was speedily stilled, by the Queen's recognition of the Establishment in all the rights secured for it by her predecessor, on the throne. But the feeling of relief was followed by deep searching of heart among the brethren, when the Privy Council sent down an order for all ministers to "swear the Allegiance and subscribe the Assurance" to Queen Anne's Government.

The Presbytery took this communication into serious consideration, and on January 17, 1703, Cameron was appointed to draw up a "declaration concerning the Oath," which, while reciting the securities granted to the Church under the Claim of Right, yielded to the Queen all due subjection and loyalty within the laws. This was at once signed by Cameron, Monteith, Ewart, Spalding, Falconer, Clark, Johnston, and Gordon. Warner, Tod, Telfair, and Macmillan, although present, did not then sign.

On February 9, a second Presbyterial Fast was solemnly appointed, the "causes" being three in number, viz. : "(1°) the deplorable division in the bounds, which seemingly increaseth ; (2°) the deplorable state of the Church of France ; (3°) that prayer may be put up that the Lord may direct and countenance the ensuing General Assembly and Parliament." The reference under the first head is obscure, but we may assume that the Oath of Allegiance and Bond of Assurance were already producing much dissension among the clergy, many of whom hesitated to accept either or both. The "Church of France" means of course the Huguenots, who at this time were suffering

terrible persecutions. The Edict of Nantes had been revoked in 1685, Scotland's own "killing time," and since then, thousands had been driven from their homes or put to death. The Assembly was the first of Queen Anne's time, and guidance would assuredly be needed.

The Presbytery did not fail, at the same meeting, to renew their previous overtures to the Assembly, and they added two more. One was a demand for the deposition of any minister who should "seek after, or have the offer of a bishopric, and comply therewith." The other called for the prohibition of the "English Service" within the Church, and was aimed at the remanent "curates."

The first symptoms of "division" appeared in the minute of April 8, 1703, when Tod of Buittle was dealt with as to statements which he was reported to have made, reflecting on the brethren who had taken the oath. It was rumoured that he held the oath to be sinful, and had said that it placed an Erastian yoke on their necks. Tod, in effect, answered to the interrogations that these rumours were "arrand lies," and "further added, that although he looked upon the said oath as sinful, yet he looked not upon it as a ground of separation; and that he would not separate unless the Presbytery thrust him to the door, and then he knew what to do." The moderator at this stage admonished him to "forbear all divisive courses."

Such was the first muttering of the storm, which broke out more fully at the next meeting, May 15. Tod was not present, but divisions appeared in another quarter of the Presbytery's bounds. "This day," says the minute, "John Thomson in Castell in the parish of Rerrick, came in with several other men with him, designing themselves the commissioners from the societies of five parishes, and offered a paper to the Presbytery entitled, 'The causes given them by the Church, hindering their communion therewith.'"

These were evidently the elected representatives from the Society people of certain parishes not specified, one of which, no doubt, was Rerrick, and possibly Balmaghie, Carsphairn, and Buittle were also represented. They were questioned by the moderator, whether they had come to "calumniate the Church, or to receive light," and whether they would accept the Presbytery's decision as binding. They ignored the embarrassing query first put, but as to the second point, they frankly declared that they could not own the Presbytery as a "judicatory of Christ." Thereupon, the Presbytery very naturally declined to receive their paper. The deputies then "took instruments in the clerk's hands," as did also the moderator on behalf of the Presbytery. This meant that each party protested its *bona fides*, the Presbytery, in particular, declaring that it refused the deputation a hearing solely on the ground that they would not own its authority.

The dilemma of these good men was one on which the Society people were constantly impaled. If the judicatories were true courts of Christ's Church on earth, then why refuse to own and submit to them? If they were not, why approach them at all with papers or protests?

This scene was at once followed by a dramatic incident, which, even in the formal minute, has a strange interest. "This day, Mr. Macmillan gave in a sort of a verbal protest against all the evils of this Church; to which the moderator said, 'And so doe we all of us.' As also, Mr. Macmillan declared that he would withdraw from the Presbytery for three or four Presbytery days, and perhaps longer, and refused to give the reasons of his withdrawing: moreover, declared that he had no correspondence with John Thomson and his followers, and disapproved their actings as irregular. Upon which he went out, and the Presbytery, considering the matter, thought fit to send the clerk to call him in, that the Presbytery might discourse more fully.

And being come in, the moderator spoke gravely to him, and desired the grounds why he withdrew from the Presbytery. To which he answered, that he withdrew not from this Presbytery only, but from the whole National Church of Scotland as now established, and that the Oath of Allegiance, as cumulative to other defections, was the grounds of his withdrawing, and that he declared he knew not whether this Church was Presbyterian or Episcopal, in regard the General Assembly had not declared the same by their explicit act. Whereto the moderator, in name of the rest, answered to the first, that the Oath of Allegiance was not sin, but duty, and a walking conform to the principles of our covenanted work of Reformation, which the Presbytery was able to make appear against all gainsayers. And to the second, that the divine right of Presbytery did not depend on a declaration of the General Assembly, but upon the Word of God, neither was ever a Church Government exercised by Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, national and provincial, without prelates, doubted to be a Presbyterian Church before. But Macmillan asserted he would speak no more at that time, and removing himself, the moderator, in name and authority of the Presbytery, required him to attend the Presbytery for converse, and act as a co-presbyter conform to his ordination engagements. But he refused and went forth. The Presbytery reserves the consideration of this till the next."

From the above, it is clear that Macmillan's hopes had sunk so low that he began to entertain doubts of the lawfulness of further association with the Church in its present course. Absence or "withdrawing" from the meetings was jealously noted, as the outward sign of dissatisfaction and divisiveness. Accordingly we find a committee appointed at next meeting, June 8, to go to the manse of Buittle and converse with Tod, who was a second time absent without excuse, and was known to have intimated from the pulpit "public exercise in his house"



the day of the last meeting. Macmillan's absence was also discussed, and the Presbytery, considering his "offensive carriage" at the last meeting, appointed a second committee to converse with him at the manse of Balmaghie. In each case, if the committee found "noe satisfaction," they were to cite the absent brother to attend next meeting.

Tod proved amenable to "converse," and promised to attend a meeting at New Galloway on July 6. Macmillan declined to attend the next meeting, but proffered an excuse which the committee did not believe. They therefore cited him, and, as he did not appear, the Presbytery appointed another committee.

At the New Galloway meeting on July 6, a new offender appeared in the person of Reid of Carsphairn, whose absence for some time had attracted the jealous eye of his brethren. Macmillan and Tod came late. Their affair was delayed to the *sessio secunda* at 5 p.m., when the first demonstration was made of joint action by the trio of absentees. They produced now a paper, which they desired to be read "instantly." A long debate ensued. At last the three malcontents were requested to retire, while the Presbytery further deliberated. Thereupon, Macmillan took the lead, and shewed his quickness in applying Church forms of process. He declared that if they withdrew at the Presbytery's request, they were "stated" (we say nowadays *sisted*) as parties at the bar. The Presbytery ignored the objection, and the three brethren retired. A vote was taken, and it was unanimously agreed, late as it then was, to hear the paper read; but to stipulate that the Presbytery's official answer to the paper should be a written one. This was meant to avoid difficulties which might arise from a verbal discussion.

The trio were then recalled, and judgment intimated. Macmillan, for himself and the other two, at once protested, and "dicted" a formal statement to the clerk urging that, having been received as co-presbyters, they should not have been



treated as parties. Tod also added a complaint, that they were not to be permitted to discuss the paper, but bound down to written answers.

We pause to say, emphatically, that at this critical stage the Presbytery went wrong, whatever may be held as to their later actings. Undoubtedly these three men were members of court. They were not as yet under any libel. They were entitled to vote along with their brethren until a libel should be duly drawn up and served. To exclude them, while a secret discussion and vote were taken, was in the highest degree irregular and unjust.

The formidable paper, thus wrangled over, will be found elsewhere. It was the "Grievances." The reading was followed by "long conference," during which the three grew impatient, and "went out without leave asked or given, and left the Presbytery, though called to attend." Tod, however, promised to attend next meeting. It was nearly midnight when Warner produced a letter of advice from the Commission on the affair; surely a strange suppression of so important a document. Telfair was commissioned to take up a reply to Edinburgh, along with all the documents, and to ask for a committee to come and help in settling the matter.

In order to prepare an answer to the "Grievances," a committee was appointed, consisting of Warner, Telfair, Cameron, Boyd, Ewart, and Monteith. These men may therefore be regarded as the *elite* of the whole Presbytery for learning and character. A reference to the details\* given in a former chapter will shew how little sympathy Macmillan's strict and uncompromising views could expect from them.

\* See Chap. iv.

## CHAPTER VII.

1703.

### STRESS.

The "Grievances" discussed—The "Answers" given in, and discussed—Protestation by the Three Ministers—An Agreement made—Dispute over Oath of Allegiance—The Synod's "Act"—Reid dealt with—Macmillan dealt with—His subsequent remarks—Action by the Presbytery in consequence—A Committee to "pose" him.

MACMILLAN to the last held, that the moving cause which led to his being accused and deposed was the "Grievances." In this chapter, therefore, we shall first consider the "Grievances," and then record the events which culminated in the trial and sentence.

On a careful examination, it is seen at once that, although no less than twelve separate abuses are named, they all in some form or other flow from the first. This complaint is, that the divine right of Presbytery has never been explicitly set forth in an Act of the General Assembly, and recognised by the State. The "intrinsic power" is a direct inference from the "divine right," and the grievances, which refer to invasions of this power, are all based on the initial maxim, that the Church, being divinely appointed, is subject to no earthly restraints. Macmillan declares that the "intrinsic power" is "now become a case of confession." In other words, it was in his view a doctrine ignored or denied by the State, and not strenuously maintained, at any cost, by the Church. Hence, the true Christian must confess it before men, by taking such individual action as seemed possible. The arbitrary dissolution of one Assembly, and the

equally arbitrary convoking of another, the "tergiversing" of the Moderator and Clerk, the failure to assert, at Queen Anne's accession, that Presbytery was founded on the Word of God, all these were infringements of the "intrinsic power," or divine right of the Church. Macmillan complained of certain other abuses, connected partly with the past, and partly with the present. Curates had been taken into the Church, indulged ministers had never been required to do penance : the burning of the Covenants at Linlithgow had not been expiated : the Act Rescissory had not been rescinded in its turn : malignants, or persons guilty of persecuting the Covenanters, were left unmolested : discipline was relaxed, and fines too often taken in place of true repentance : the Oath of Allegiance and Bond of Assurance had been generally accepted by ministers, as a condition of continuing to hold their sacred office.

Such, roughly stated, is Macmillan's indictment, and it bears out the statement that the whole controversy flowed from the question of the *jus divinum*. Is the Church of Scotland merely an institution established by the State because (as the Claim of Right put it) it is "agreeable to the inclinations of the people?" Or is it a divine body, the very body of Christ, appointed in all its parts by him or his immediate disciples, and therefore the true Church, whether "agreeable" or not? Let it be remembered, that all Macmillan's co-presbyters professed to hold the *jus divinum*. As we have seen, his Presbytery had twice overtured the General Assembly to declare it. Macmillan occupied the strongest logical ground, when he said, that the divine authority of the Church excluded interference by a secular hand with its courts, or with the members thereof, whether by calling or dissolving Assemblies, or by imposing oaths of allegiance, as a qualification for the holy ministry.

We shall see how the Presbytery's best wits were tried to meet Macmillan's logic. The Committee were allowed 20 days

to "have their thoughts." Accordingly, they reported on 28th July, that the Answers were ready, and asked that "some might be appointed to transcribe them" into the Presbytery's book, a copy to be also given to Macmillan, who, alone of the three, was then present. Cameron and Ewart were chosen as the scribes, and the work was to be done while the Presbytery continued to sit. Macmillan shewed impatience, saying he had come specially to get these Answers; and he intimated that he would not stay longer that day, but send over for them "the morrow morning." The Presbytery, however, had now received directions from the Commission how to proceed. They admonished the impatient brother to "walk orderly," and bade him "sitt down." Accordingly, he "satt down," but declared that he would give no reply to the Presbytery's paper "until he had consulted the other two brethren." There is much cause to think, that the "other two" by this time, were meditating submission.

It was not till the 17th of August, at a meeting held at Pol-sack in Balmaghie, that the "Answers" were finally adjusted. Macmillan absented himself, as did the other two. But he had probably already seen the rough draught. A copy was ordered to be made *in mundo*, and sent to him, to be communicated by him to Reid and Tod. All three were to be written to, and certified that, if they did not attend next meeting or send a "relevant excuse," the Presbytery would proceed against them without further delay. Such, indeed, were the instructions received from headquarters, where no mercy was shewn to ministers of Macmillan's stamp, who were regarded as a danger to the Church in such unsettled times.

These "Answers" fill 14 folio pages of the records, and certainly exhibit a masterly hand throughout, which I take to be Cameron's. The whole ground is covered with such care and detail, as to make the document a valuable one, in the light of present-day discussions.

Regarding the *jus divinum* and its consequence, the "intrinsic power," both are admitted and maintained in theory. In practice it is owned that there is defect. But it is pointed out that no fewer than twenty-four Presbyteries had overtured the last Assembly (being Queen Anne's first) to assert the divine right and power. Of these, the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright was one. And it is admitted that it would be well if the Assembly were conjunctly dissolved, as formerly, by the Moderator saying "*In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone King and Head of the Church.*" This grievance was remedied in the following year, when the custom at present in use was restored. So far the Presbytery's position seems to be that a gradual assertion and acquisition of the Church's rights are being made. This is the gist of their remarks on all the points immediately connected with the intrinsic power and divine right. They say, in effect, "We hold these doctrines as strongly as you do, but we are more patient than you are in trying to secure their embodiment in a National Church." The argument is, therefore, that the Presbytery are conscious of grievances, but labouring to redress them, and not without some success.

When, however, the other matters of detail are touched, the answer given is either a flat denial of matters of fact, or a refusal to debate matters belonging to the past. As practical men, the Presbytery urge that these bygone events, such as the Indulgences, the burning of the Covenants, and the persecutions, should be allowed to rest in the grave of the past. "Let the dead bury their dead."

The conclusion of the "Answers" is not without a touch of pathos and eloquence. "These are our grievances as well as yours." . . . "If a Church be orthodox in doctrine . . . pure in worship . . . there can be no ground of withdrawing from her, though there be defects of particular judicatories

in the exercise of discipline, besides other grievances. It's easy for you to carp at defects in the Church, but let us see what help ye will give us to redress them." An appeal is made to the complainers to return to brotherly ways, in the face of the abounding scandals in the Presbytery. "Our hands are few and weak." Their separation from the Presbytery will further weaken the Church, and the enemies "are watching at the gate."

Reading such sentences in modern light, one feels that they have a ring of sincerity. At the same time it is undeniable that they embody an attempt to obscure the issue. Macmillan, at least, was prepared to say *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*. Let the Establishment perish, provided the absolute divine truth be held fast! But he had to deal with men of business, not of theories. To them, *jus divinum* and "intrinsic power" were principles of faith. Expediency and compromise were principles of policy. They were not prepared to go out again into the wilderness. Much had been conceded already by the State, and more would yet be gained in quieter times. As Monteith said, half remorsefully, they could not do more than they did\*, without losing all for which they and their fathers had fought and bled. Was it wise, or patriotic, or even Christian, to pull down the whole house, because of a defective gable-end, or a little portion affected with dry rot? The Church was not all they had hoped, but it was more than they could afford to despise. And so, these wise fathers and brethren practically besought Macmillan to swallow his scruples, as they were doing. He must "grin and bear it," hoping for a recompense. Or else he must go out alone into the darkness.

The Presbytery's "Answers" concluded with a sharp command, and something like a threat " . . . we require you

\* *Testimony*, p. 47.

to consider thir things, to live orderly and peaceably in brotherly love with us, who are willing for the peace of the Church, to let fall bygone mistakes. But withal, we must tell you, if ye continue to provoke this Church by such uncharitable and unchristian calumnies, schism and contumacy added thereunto, ye will expose yourselves to her just censure. Your positive and express answer is required, with respect to thir things, namely, what use ye intend to make of them, whether to withdraw from us, or continue with us. . . .”

It is observable that the Presbytery, from this point, treated Macmillan differently from the other two “dissenting brethren,” as the minute of August 17 styles them. For while Boyd is appointed to write to Reid his neighbour, and Falconer in like manner is to write to Tod ; in Macmillan’s case, the “Clerk of the Presbytery” is specified as the person who is to communicate with him. It is true that the Clerk at this time was Gordon of Crossmichael, Macmillan’s neighbour ; but this was a pure coincidence, arising from his being the youngest ordained minister.

The Presbytery’s tactics were clear. They aimed at cutting up the small band, and dealing with each offender separately. In this design they ultimately succeeded, but not until the three brethren had, as required, tendered a joint answer to the Presbytery’s remonstrances. This answer took the familiar form of a “protestation,” and is here given *verbatim* :—

“Protestation against all the corruptions, defections, errors, and mismanagements, in the Church Government of Scotland as now established ; in particular, against the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright for not disowning them and endeavouring their redress :

“Whereas, it is sufficiently plain to all unbiassed, impartial and discerning ministers and Christians within the National Church, that there are many things amiss in the present constitution, especially as it is ecclesiastic or relates to the Church, of



which a catalogue, so far as we know, hath been produced to the Judicatory for remeed and redress, as far as is proper to them and within their power: and yet the said Judicatory having given no satisfying answers thereto, as is wished, which is evident in their 'Answers' to the said Grievances represented to them:

"Therefore, we, undersubscribing ministers, elders, and Christians who will adhere to us, protests and declares against all the corruptions as enumerated in the said catalogue and representation, and all others not named in the said catalogue. And hereby we avouch ourselves bound in conscience to disown the said corruptions, and humbly requires you, the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, to renounce the same; and thereupon takes instruments and craves an extract.

"Written and subscribed by the Clerk at the said Presbytery's appointment, requiring that this our Protest may be insert in your Presbytery Book. In testimony whereof we have subscribed the presents at Polsack, the 30th of August, 1703. *Sic subscribitur* :—

J. REID.  
WILLIAM TOD.  
J. M'MILLAN."

A clause was added as follows :—

"This Protestation, being for the exoneration of our consciences, is not to be interpreted a separation from the Church of Scotland, but to have these our Grievances redressed in an orderly way. And we hereby engage to concur in our capacity for redress of the same, and in other duties according to the Word of God, and our Covenanted Work of Reformation."

It must be owned that the terms of the foregoing "Protestation" were sufficiently irritating, coming as it did from three of the youngest and least noted members. The "Judicatory" would not have been human, if it had not shewn some annoyance at such expressions as "no satisfying answer;" "requires you the said Presbytery to renounce the same." Cameron had lavished all his learning and wit on the "Answers," and his only reward is to be curtly told that he has failed to satisfy these



men, who had no claim to scholarship at all. The Presbytery is solemnly and particularly accused of breach of duty in not disowning and redressing the "corruptions." In short, the document, whether intentionally or not, was fitted to provoke severe reprisals. It was little else than an informal "Libel" against the Presbytery. And it might well be answered by a formal "Libel" against its authors.

The Presbytery, however, did not wish to have three criminals to deal with at one time. "For peace sake" they consented to receive and record the whole paper as above. The additional clause was an afterthought, and furnished at a later stage a battle-ground between Macmillan and his critics, who held it to be a renewed pledge of obedience to the Church Courts. His contention, however, was then and always, that he was no separatist, but a steadfast upholder of a pure national religion.

The Presbytery inflicted upon itself and its disturbers the penance of hearing the entire "Grievances" and "Answers" read over at this meeting. This work must have consumed at least an hour and a half. At the close of it, the Presbytery recorded a brief criticism of the "Protestation," reaffirming their position, namely, that the real "Grievances" were theirs as well as Macmillan's, and were being redressed as far as the Presbytery could procure. They pronounced the Protestation to be excessive and groundless, unless as a protest against the Oath of Allegiance.

As soon as this stage was reached, Reid rose and "declared that he was not free to join with ministers who have taken the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen at the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; to which Mr. Macmillan adhered." This fresh outbreak produced a commotion in the Court. Monteith, Ewart, Spalding, Falconer, Johnston, and Gordon, announced that "they could not in conscience act with the said two brethren in Presbytery until they had retracted."

As we have seen, these ministers, along with Cameron and Clark, had all signed the Declaration and Bond of Assurance at the beginning of this year. They now argued that this new statement was in direct violation of the engagement just given by the three protesters, to "concur" with their fellow-ministers.

The argument was specious, but it falls to pieces when we note that the Presbytery added new matter by singling out the Oath of Allegiance as the true and only substantial grievance of the three brethren. Let it be remembered that there was much doubt felt all over the Church regarding this Oath. Was it to be silently endured, that now the protesters should be singled out as having specially refused the pledge of loyalty to the Queen? Macmillan was willing to "concur" with the Presbytery as a Court of Christ, but not as a Court of Queen Anne. Hence the new protest of Reid, to which he adhered, and which at once practically separated both of them from the majority of their brethren.

Here, the matter rested for the next two months. But in that interval, the Synod's advice was asked, and on the prompting of the leading opponents of Macmillan, an Act of the Synod was read at the Presbytery's meeting on November 2, which was a meeting "for prayer and privy censures." We have described the *modus operandi* at these sittings. The brethren were removed "two by two," and returning, "were exhorted and admonished as cause was found, except Messrs. Reid and Macmillan, of whom annone." It may be noted, that Tod was absent from this and subsequent meetings until the final deposition scene took place. The Synod's Act was as follows:—

"The Synod, upon some reports they heard of Messrs. Reid, Tod, and Macmillan, in the Presbytery's censures, having called the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright to give an account how matters stood betwixt the Presbytery and them, and the said Presbytery having given an account of the true state of affairs betwixt them, did by their vote appoint the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright to lay

before the brethren all their miscarriages they know, whether doctrinal or practical, contrair to their engagements at their ordination, and the order of this Church. And if they answer not the Presbytery satisfyingly for what is past, and give security of their orderly behaviour in time coming, that they may either call for correspondents from neighbouring presbyteries to be assisting to them, or else advise the Moderator of the Synod to call the Synod *pro re natâ* ; or further, that they may either refer the matter to the Commission of the General Assembly, or crave a committee of their number for assistance to the Synod, as they shall see cause. And in the meantime, appoints the Presbytery of Wigtown to correspond with the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, ay and until these differences be brought to a final conclusion." The Presbytery "did read the samen together with some particulars given by a private hand against Messrs. Reid and Macmillan, at the Synod."\*

One can only endorse Macmillan's own criticism† on the extraordinary procedure of a Court, which acted so energetically upon an *ex parte* statement, and on such flimsy evidence as "some particulars given by a private hand" against persons not present or formally accused. These "particulars" could never be obtained, although Macmillan demanded a copy. The Presbytery, however, at once proceeded to deal with Reid and Macmillan, Tod being meanwhile absent.

Reid was taken first, and was "posed" with certain of the "particulars" from the "private hand." It seems, that he had been tracked by a hostile hearer from one place to another, and some of his utterances had been taken down. For instance, "about a year or two agoe," he was accused of teaching at a Sacramental occasion, that the Lord's Supper was a "converting ordinance," and "debarring" all who would not accept and approve all the testimonies of the late sufferers in "houses, fields, scaffolds, or elsewhere." Reid explained, that what he really said was, that preaching about the Lord's Supper was

\* Presb. Rec., Nov. 2, 1703.

† See *Appendix*.

“means of conversion;” and that his “debarring” was rash, and “should have been qualified by these words, ‘according to the Word of God.’” Then, there was a “flagrant report” regarding an utterance at Straiton in the Presbytery of Ayr, to the effect that “Jephthah’s vow, Judges xi. 32, was neither rash nor indeliberate, otherways (said he), ‘a cat or a dog might have met him from his house at his return, as well as his daughter.’” Here, Reid answered that he remembered no such thing. He was further accused of a Socinian error in his presbyterial exercise, when a member of Wigtown Presbytery, and finally of making, on September 28, 1703, “his repentance in the pulpit of Carsphairn” for taking the Oath of Allegiance to the late King William. The Socinianism he denied; and as to the Oath, he explained, that he gave the statement challenged as only one of his scruples regarding the new Oath to Queen Anne, that his former subscription to King William “grumbled his conscience.” But the public recantation, he also denied. The Presbytery praised his “candor and readiness to take with mistakes.” And on a further pledge of concurrence and non-separation, provided the Presbytery sought redress of the “grievances,” they “for peace sake, did pass all bygone as to Mr. Reid, if he carry as he has engaged.” But otherwise, if he should prove “turbulent and divisive,” he was threatened with censure.

With Macmillan, no doctrinal questions arose. The whole examination, to which he was now subjected, referred to the question of separation from the Presbytery. Macmillan, on the renewed understanding that the Presbytery would take action for reform, agreed to “recede or resile” from his position taken up on May 11th, namely, that he would absent himself “for three or four Presbytery days.” Further, he declared his adherence to his ordination vows. Thereupon, though without any such expression of satisfaction as in Reid’s case, they, “being

desirous to be as condescending as they could, for peace sake do pass all bygone differences and misbehaviours of said Mr. John Macmillan, declaring that, if he behave not orderly for the future, but shall be turbulent or divisive, that then all former things, now passed from, shall be revived, and he censured for them, with those new offences, as shall be found just."

Macmillan was evidently already unpopular among his brethren, and the submission wrung from him was, on the face of it, a hollow one, and founded on a hollow pledge of forthcoming reforms. And it soon appeared, how little it had altered his feelings as to the situation. The agreement was made on a Tuesday, November 2, and on the following Friday, November 5, according to the Libel, it was alleged that he remarked to "George Mackguffog in Drumleane, an elder," that "the Presbytery and he were agreed." On the Sunday following, November 7, however, he is stated to have said from the pulpit, that "no such agreement is like to be," and "spake of 'Clubbing' with the Presbytery." Macmillan's explanation was, that "when he went to his studies the said Friday at even, they did not go with him, and that he had not freedom in prayer." His remarks, on this memorable first Sunday of November seem, according to the Libel, to have been full of references to the crisis. He said, "there were once three that stood for the Truth, but now he knew not, but there was but one; and that, though they should all leave him, he resolved to stand where he was." Further, he declared, that "he laid his account to be persecuted by the ministry for these things." Then, on the third Sunday, November 21, he "desired the people of Balmaghie to stick by him; and if they would not, he would stand to his hazard."

All these excited utterances, perhaps a little garbled, were duly reported to the Presbytery by "several of the brethren," who had gathered them from "some of the elders and people of

Balmaghie." Immediately it was agreed (*"nemine contradicente"*) to appoint Cameron, Falconer, Monteith, Johnston, Gordon, and Campbell of Minnigaff, a "corresponding member" from Wigtown, with "George Meik, late bailie of Kirkcudbright, ruling elder," to deal at once with the recalcitrant brother. No time was to be lost. They were to go next day to the manse, or "any other parts of the parish where Mr. Macmillan may be found." They were to "pose" him as to these alleged expressions, to demand his renewed adherence to the recent agreement, and to insist on a pledge to be subject to the Presbytery. Failing satisfaction, they were empowered to draw up a libel, beginning from his first "off-breaking," and proceeding "step by step." This libel they were directed to deliver to the accused, and, at the same time, to cite him to appear at a Visitation to be held at Balmaghie Church on the 28th December, or three weeks thence. Macmillan was to be ordered to intimate the Visitation, but Monteith was appointed to preach at it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1703.

### ADRIFT.

Macmillan “posed” at Balmaghie Place—A Libel served—The Visitation—“Scene” before it—Macmillan’s Sermon criticised—Queries to people—Proposed New Agreement—Composition of Court—Macmillan’s Response—The Trial begins—Dispute between Cameron and Macmillan—Protestation by the people—And by Macmillan—The Presbytery is “declined” by both—An adjournment to Crossmichael Church—The Court melting away—Macmillan deposed unanimously by 11 Ministers—Length of the sederunt—Scene at early dawn.

THE pace was quickening, and a few more strides bring us to the final scene. On 28th December, 1703, the Presbytery assembled at Balmaghie Church. This was a Tuesday, and the sittings were continued all day without any apparent intermission, from ten a.m. In the interval, the Presbytery’s Committee had hunted out Macmillan, and had run him to earth at “Balmaghie Place.” There they had “posed” him for many hours as to the alleged statements which were in question; but he was now on his guard, and demanded that proof should be led. The Committee had attempted to extract a pledge of submission, but in vain. At last, “it being very late in a gentleman’s house,” they had adjourned, after agreeing to draw up a libel, and entrusting Cameron and Monteith with the task. They had also cited Macmillan to the Visitation, and appointed him to preach. He had answered that he would certainly intimate the Visitation, but “knows not if he will preach.” All



this was duly reported on 28th December, and the libel was laid on the table.

Before the actual trial began, a curious scene took place at the manse. Cameron and Tod had arrived first, and Macmillan, probably not relishing their company, hurried out of the house to conduct service. Cameron hotly remonstrated against beginning before the brethren were assembled.\* It was an hour before the usual time of sermon at such meetings. There appears to have been an established custom, as the Presbytery's minute says :—"An hour sooner than ordinary on the Presbytery days, when the brethren met in the parish of Balmaghie, in which the Presbytery meets frequently, being the midst of the Presbytery bounds." As Macmillan issued from the manse, he met his friend Reid of Carsphairn at the door, and noticed "several others within gunshot." So he himself declares in his second defence, the "Examination tried and found false."† A reference to the "Narrative" will show that he held the Presbytery to be convened before he began to preach. In any case, it is clear that he mounted the pulpit in some haste, leaving his reverend visitors to straggle in as best they could.

The church had been crowded long before the service began. Macmillan preached on the same text as he had chosen more than two years before, when he first occupied that pulpit as the ordained minister of Balmaghie. It was Psalm lxii. 8—"Pour out your hearts before him." He had been "upon" this text for some Sundays, and in the snappish criticisms recorded in the Presbytery minutes it is complained that he did not give the

\* The minute of Presbytery says :—"But he (Macmillan) answered superciliously, that the people were met, and he would wait no longer upon them."

† *The Examination of the True Narrative tried and found false*, 1706. Anonymous, but undoubtedly the work of the same hand as the "True Narrative."



“heads” of his former sermons, nor “hold forth that which is principal and most essential in pouring out of the heart before God.” It is also complained that he “had no application,” and that in his prayers, first and last, he never once mentioned the Visitation, or asked for direction to the Presbytery, although he “prayed for direction to himself and the people.”

There is something positively astounding in the procedure at this point. Macmillan had been served with a libel by the Committee “timeously,” so as to be prepared to give answers that day. Monteith had been appointed by the Presbytery to preach, it being manifestly irregular to follow the usual custom of committing the religious service to the minister of the parish visited. For the minister of the parish was practically under discipline. Yet first the Committee, of which Monteith himself was chairman, upset this appointment, and permit or require Macmillan to preach. Then the Presbytery find fault with every part of his service. The sermon was an hour too soon; the brethren “heard little” of the service in consequence; he “had no application”; he did not pray for “direction” to the brethren in the work of visitation! Such complaints border on the ludicrous, when it is remembered that they are made by judges against an accused person. What sort of “application” could the criminal venture to make to the bench of judges? Was it reasonable to expect him to pray, that they might be “directed” how best to convict and punish him?

Macmillan deeply felt the unfair treatment which he received in this respect, and did not scruple to assert, in his anonymous tracts, that he had been entrapped. As we saw, the appointment to preach took him by surprise; at first he did not know if he would do so. The snare which he believed was laid for him was this—If he did not preach he was disobedient; if he did, he might be challenged as acting unlawfully.\* The incon-

\* *See Narrative.*

sistent action of the Presbytery may well breed a doubt as to their fairness and fitness in the whole judicial proceedings.

After service, the people had flocked out for a little, while the Presbytery read over the minutes and papers, and elaborated the above remarkable criticisms. Macmillan also had retired, but was at length called in to hear the observations on his pulpit ministrations. As soon as the people saw their minister re-enter the church, they also came in "in a disorderly way, without being called." The Presbytery were now face to face with the real offenders, for nothing is more certain than that Macmillan alone could not for a moment have withstood the Presbytery's will.

It was an eventful hour in the parish history, and it is interesting to note the constitution of the Court assembled in the little parish church. Of the clergy, all at first were there but Bryden and Hay. Bryden was in poor health; Hay afterwards fell into disrepute, and perhaps already he was in evil odour. Boyd, who should have presided, begged to be excused on the ground of "indisposition"; and Ewart, whom we have supposed to be Macmillan's former pastor in Kells, and who was no friend to the accused, was chosen to fill the Moderator's chair. In accordance with the Synod's Act, two "correspondents" from Wigtown Presbytery attended--viz., Mr. Rowan of Penninghame and Mr. Campbell of Minnigaff. Thus, the ministers from Macmillan's parishes of boyhood and early manhood were all present. Twelve elders brought up the bench of judges to the total of 27, out of a possible attendance of 33. We exclude Macmillan, as being accused, but include his elder, Alexander Cairns of Garroch, as entitled to vote if he chose. The case had evidently roused the deepest interest, since so full an attendance was seen. Seldom had so many as 12 out of 16 ruling elders attended a meeting. Had they remained to the close, the result might have been different.

The Presbytery were, from the first, agitated and intimidated by the great gathering of parishioners, which packed every corner of the small building, and overflowed into the churchyard. They made a feeble attempt to go through the usual routine of a Visitation, by asking if the meeting had been "timeously intimated," to which an affirmative answer was given. But the presence was not further kept up at this stage; for they at once proposed terms of accommodation. Would Macmillan promise to adhere to the Agreement of Nov. 3, and in future submit to the Presbytery? He replied that it was "a matter of moment," and craved half-an-hour to consider and consult. This was granted, and he retired.

In order to fill up the interval, some questions were put to the people without attempting to interrogate heritors, elders, and congregation separately, as the usual rule was. This elicited the facts that the church had "two communion cups and tables, but no cloaths, beinks (benches), nor tokens;" that there was about £23 Scots of "mortified money;" that they "led the minister's peats;" and that the manse was in "good case." Being next asked why the church was "in so ill case," they replied that "they had agreed with a sclatter (slater), and he had cheated them, but they were agreeing with another."

This perfunctory examination was now interrupted by Macmillan's return, and a scene of great excitement followed. When asked once more if he would sign the proposed new agreement he "began to discourse, with this preface, That he blessed the Lord that had perfected praise out of the mouth of babes, as we have always reason to bless him. 'And I may say' (said he), 'as great Rutherford said, that Christ can ride upon a windlestraw, and his horse not stumble!' And then directly answered, that he could not answer it at all till he be excused from the Libel. To this, his answer, he added with a loud voice, turning his face to the people, and in a violent and flouting manner

said, 'The parish of Balmaghie would have a bonnie bird of me to be their minister—a brave minister—a bonnie dearie indeed, if I subscribe this till I be excused from the Libel!'"

As it was afterwards asserted by Cameron and others, that at this stage Macmillan refused a "condescending accommodation," it is only fair to set the facts in the clearest light. Macmillan was then an accused person, having been served with a libel. Suddenly, he is asked to sign a pledge of absolute submission to the Presbytery, his judges, and so to escape the trial and sentence. As an honest man he recoiled from the temptation. The submission demanded of him amounted to a betrayal of his own testimony in the "Grievances." He was asked to bind himself, hand and foot, against any further action, such as he and his two older friends had already taken. If he agreed to this, he might as well for the future cut out his tongue, so far as he would be entitled to protest against any further encroachments by the State. He would become a "dumb dog that cannot bark," or, as he himself put it in his native Doric, "a bonnie bird to be a minister!"

Moreover, he was morally and legally right in saying to his Presbytery: "You have accused me, now try me; but do not ask me to sign or say anything which may be used to my hurt." That, surely, is a first principle of justice and fair-play.

The Presbytery now abandoned further parley and proceeded in due form to establish the legal service of the Libel on December 13, by the Presbytery officer, in presence of two witnesses, James Macmillan, the brother of the accused,\* and David Clacharty, a deacon of the church. The copy thus served on Macmillan was now "collated" with the Presbytery's original, found an exact one, and signed by the Clerk. The Libel was at once found relevant, *i.e.*, legally worded, and con-

\* James Macmillan at Glenhead was born in 1692, hence, perhaps, too young for a legal witness.

taining matter inferring penalties ; and it was resolved to deal first with those parts or "articles" which were to be proved by the people's evidence.

In what now follows, the reader is requested to refer to the copy of the Libel in the appendix to this volume.

The sixth article referred to a synodical fast in May, and Macmillan admitted that he had not observed this fast on the day appointed, but had held it on another day. The tenth and 11th charges were met by an answer from the people, that they remembered no such statements being made by their minister. As to the 12th, which was to be proved by the testimony of an elder, George M'Guffog, farmer in Drumlane ; that individual refused to say anything till they gave up the name of the person to whom he was alleged to have made the incriminating statement. Doubtless it was a minister ; in any case the Presbytery, "upon certain considerations," decided to delay this point.

Here another "scene" took place, Macmillan insisting that the Presbytery minutes misrepresented him as to his alleged reunion to their number and abandonment of his position. Cameron now lost his temper, and roundly accused minister and people of perjury. At once Macmillan "took instruments," and entered the unfailing protest. Cameron retorted by calling for a Confession of Faith with the Covenants bound up with it, and Macmillan handed him the volume. He proceeded to argue that, as Macmillan and his people had quite recently "renewed" the Covenants, and as the Covenants contained most solemn engagements to conformity with the Reformed Church ; therefore, in separating themselves, they broke their oath, and were perjured.

While this curious argument was going on the people had not been idle. In a pause which succeeded, while their minister was elaborating his reasons of protest, the people on their own behalf presented a long "protestation," signed by no less than 87 per-

sons, being practically the entire adult male parishioners. It is doubtful if this move was favourable to Macmillan's cause. It could not be pleasant to the Presbytery to be told that Macmillan, now compearing as "ane delinquent," was in their judgment "of more integrity than his accusers and prosecutors:" that the prosecution arose from Macmillan's opposition to the "defections" of unfaithful ministers, "of whom, we fear, ye are a party:" that, whatever sentence the Presbytery pronounced against their "faithful pastor," would by them be held null and void: that the people would adhere to him and "own him as their pastor under Christ Jesus the Chief Shepherd." Four distinct reasons were added for disregarding the Presbytery's authority:—(1), Macmillan was being pursued, because he stood for truth against compromise; (2), The Presbytery were both judge and party; (3), The authority of the Presbytery was questionable, since by their "Erastian Oaths" they seemed to have "given away the whole power of jurisdiction of this National Church into the hands of the Civil Magistrate;" and (4), Macmillan alone was being pursued, and the other two ministers were passed by.

It will be seen, what irritating matter this ably drawn and well-expressed protestation contained. Strictly speaking, the court might have refused to receive and engross it, since nothing could well be more disrespectful; but they did both, minuting that it was received as "a specimen of the people of Balmaghie . . . their disaffection towards the ministry, and of the effects of Mr. Macmillan's ministry among them." The "people's paper," as it was thenceforward styled, was so able, that the Presbytery asked Macmillan if he had prepared it. This he denied, but would not say that he had not seen it before. He then signed and gave in his own protestation, which embodied a refusal to accept further the jurisdiction of that court. After reciting various reasons, already discussed, he concluded thus:



—"The said Mr. John Macmillan declines this Presbytery, and appeals to the first free and rightly, lawfully constituted General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for remeid and redress . . . ." He desired the appeal to be engrossed *ad futuram rei memoriam*, "for the remembrance of posterity."

Thus deluged with protests, the Presbytery at last took refuge in an adjournment. "It being now very late, and the brethren and others present very long detained here already," they agreed to meet next day at Crossmichael Church at 10 a.m. to adjust their "animadversions" on the two protests. They cited Macmillan, there and then, to be present at that place and hour; but he answered, that to do so would be inconsistent with his declinature of their authority. He was curtly told, that they should proceed, whether he came or not. The "Beddel" having announced the forthcoming meeting at the church-door, the worn-out presbyters rose at 9 p.m., having sat unintermittedly for about ten hours.

The position of affairs was now highly peculiar. Both people and pastor had "declined" the Presbytery, anticipating an adverse decision. For them, the subsequent proceedings were unmeaning. Although in the calmer mood of our time, we may feel a little surprised at this drastic course, yet we can partly understand the pent-up feelings of indignation and distrust which prompted it. The people were warmly attached to Macmillan. They spoke, in their paper, of "blessing" received from his pastoral labours among them, brief although these had been. They admired his steadfastness in a losing cause against such odds. They saw, how great a sacrifice he was ready to make in its defence, while so many eminent ministers proffered him a flattering peace. They know enough of his accusers' history to feel a certain contempt for their present policy of patching up the Church at any loss of principle. Macmillan, for his part, was well aware that he was doomed already. It was

expedient, in the view of the Church leaders, that an example should be made, to deter others from hampering the Church's progress with protests and obstructive tactics. To take further part in the proceedings and to receive a sentence, would be to own the authority of a court, which had lost his respect and confidence. So, he joined his people in their repudiation of its further actings, and retired, no doubt sadly and seriously, to his manse.

On the other hand, the undignified flight of the Presbytery shewed how entirely they admitted their loss of influence in the parish. To finish in another place what they had begun at Balmaghie Church, was to adopt an unfair and unworthy change of venue. The result of this was that, when the 29th December dawned, and the court re-assembled in Crossmichael Church, there was hardly any representation of the people of Balmaghie. The court itself was melting away. Tod and Reid now retired. Of the 12 elders, only 4 reappeared. The total number of members, lay and clerical, fell from 27 to 17. It was destined to sink lower still, as the feeling of uneasiness increased.

This day, there were two sittings, the first lasting from 10 to 4, and being devoted to reading over the people's protest and "animadverting" on it. The process was inordinately long, considering the brevity of the "people's paper," but it is likely enough, that the Presbytery felt that they were dealing with the most important part of the case, as regarded the future. For the real difficulty was not Macmillan, but Macmillan's people. And *they* could not be deposed. At 4 p.m., there was an adjournment for an hour, during which Warner and Telfair went home. The court therefore re-assembled at 5 p.m. with 15 members, of whom 4 were elders. The "animadversions" on Macmillan's paper were now prepared, after he had been vainly called for at the door of the church. These criticisms bear evidence of Cameron's incisive mind and sharp temper, but



need no further description here, except as to their length. They cover, in the records, a space of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  folios, and shew how laboriously the brethren strove to prepare a case for posterity. At the close of this work, the "probation" of the Libel began. This must have been a very formal and hurried affair, since the sederunt had begun at 5 p.m., and probably three or four hours had passed in "animadversions" on an absent man's writings.

The minutes from this point were printed in the Examination, 1705, pp. 3-7. Briefly, the first-five articles were *proven* from the Presbytery's own records, as was also the eighth; while articles seven and thirteen were *proven* from the minutes of the committee at Balmaghie Place. The sixth and ninth were held *proven* from his own admissions. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth were found *not proven*, although the eleventh (a charge of urging the people to "stick by him") was regarded as *proven* "eventually," *i.e.*, from the action taken by the people and himself in protesting and "declining" at yesterday's meeting. The reader will be able to follow the particular details as they are given in the reprint in the Appendix.

The foregoing bare statement is enough to shew how little the law of evidence was regarded on this occasion. Macmillan was found guilty either on the Presbytery's *ex parte* narrative, to which he never subscribed, or on his own admissions, which surely ought not to have been used against him apart from substantial corroboration. As to "eventual" proof, this was a new and amazing invention, which no respectable modern court would adopt. It consisted in "proving" a charge by something done after the event, by the accused, and by other parties not accused at all!

Such "probation" proved only one thing, that the judges were already resolved to convict at any hazard and on any ground. Accordingly, the terrible formula was now pronounced by Boyd, who had evidently recovered from his "indisposition,"

and was acting as moderator :—" *The Presbytery and corresponding Brethren did, and hereby do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, according to the ministerial power they have received from Him, simpliciter depose the said Mr. John Macmillan from the sacred office of the ministry.*"

The ministers who took part in the final scene and "unanimous vote," were Boyd, Spalding, Gordon, Falconer, Cameron, Clark, Monteith, Johnston, Ewart, with Rowan and Campbell, *correspondents* from Wigtown. The elders still present were John M'Douall, *Dalry*; James Gordon of Auchendolly, *Crossmichael*; James Gordon, *Borgue*; and James Macmillan, *Girthon*. The court had dwindled from twenty-seven members to fifteen, less than one-half the members being thus present, a point which, we shall see, Macmillan was swift to note.

Monteith and Hay were appointed to proceed to Balmaghie church the Sunday following the next, viz., January 9, and to intimate the sentence. Johnston was charged with a letter containing the same intimation, to be delivered the same day to the deposed minister. As we know, there were ties of "auld acquaintance," which probably suggested this arrangement.

The actual sentence was not pronounced till day had dawned on Thursday, the 30th December, 1703. The closing lines of the minute are so curious, that they must be quoted :—"The Presbytery and corresponding Brethren sat from five of the clock upon Wednesday [afternoon] till about seven upon Thursday morning, before they could finish this affair." The church at Crossmichael was lit up with candles during the midnight debate, and the unaccustomed gleam would be seen by Macmillan from his own windows. There is an unintentional irony in the phrase "finishing this affair." The affair was so far from being "finished," that twenty-four chequered years were to pass ere the deposed pastor went forth from church and manse into



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exile. And that rash and even illegal sentence was not the termination of a troublesome controversy, but the first foundation stone of a religious dissension continued to this day.

The few remaining ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian body in Scotland may well come to gaze, with curiosity and reverence, on the remains of Macmillan's church, where he stood up between his people and his judges, and across the changeless river, to the spot where, as the dull December day broke, a handful of wearied men took upon them to cast out a brother, whose chief fault was that he could not bend his conscience into shape with the prevailing mode in Church and State.

## CHAPTER IX.

1704-1706.

### ANCHORED.

Macmillan negotiates with the United Societies—With Hepburn—With the Presbytery and General Assembly—His “submission” to the latter—Goes to Crawfordjohn—His “submission” to the Societies—His “approbation” of their Testimony—His call—The chief signatories—Currie, Umpherston, Smith—First sermon as pastor—His fitness for the new office.

THE last days of 1703 witnessed Macmillan’s expulsion from the ministry. In the following year, he sent forth his *True Narrative* of the events and circumstances of his deposition, a copy of which will be found in the Appendix. The closing words shewed how his thoughts were moving as to the future :—“Therefore, he resolves, in the strength of the Lord, to preach the Gospel as formerly, and to take and accept invitation for that end where he may have it.”

His first negotiations, when he found himself so summarily cast adrift, were with a minister who had already passed through a similar crisis, John Hepburn of Urr, in the Presbytery of Dumfries. Hepburn had been privately ordained in London, and in 1680 had won the hearts of the people of Urr, so that they gave him a “call” to labour among them. This invitation they ratified in 1686, and again in 1689, when the Church of Scotland became more settled. In 1690, Hepburn had presented a memorial of matters requiring amendment to the General Assembly, but this document was quietly handed over to a committee, and heard of no more. Hepburn continued,

however, to ventilate "grievances" until, at length, he was suspended in 1696.\* In 1699, he was in a measure restored, being permitted to minister in Urr, but nowhere else, provided he kept conference with the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright. He had already been punished with imprisonment for alleged treasonable utterances, and afterwards "interned," in the old persecuting mode, at Brechin. His return to Urr was hailed with joy by his faithful flock, to whom he was now martyr as well as confessor. After a brief interval of peace, the accession of Queen Anne revived the old troubles. Hepburn denounced the Oath of Allegiance just as Macmillan did, and was at length, like him, deposed for mutinous and offensive utterances alleged against him. The sentence was passed by the Commission on April 9, 1705. On April 13, the parishioners of Urr met and declared their unalterable adherence to the deposed minister. Ultimately, on his giving a pledge to confine his labours to his own parish, and seek to promote peace, he was reponed in 1707, amid great rejoicings. We may here hurriedly pursue his career to its close. He protested against the Union, the Abjuration Oath, and the restoration of Patronage in 1712. In 1715, he attracted great public attention by his action in view of the Pretender's expedition. Accompanied by 320 of his people, whom he had trained in some degree to military tactics, he marched to Dumfries, and encamped on Corbelly Hill. His troop was headed by a standard-bearer with the flag of the Covenants, still preserved at Urr manse. A drummer also marched before it beating a point of war.

Recent researches have thrown an important light on Hepburn's actions at this political crisis. It is now suspected, if not established, that his supporters were strongly inclined to fall in with the Pretender's party, and Hepburn himself kept up com-

\* Mr. Hutchison (*Hist.* p. 148) says "deposed," but this is an error. See *Humble Pleadings*, p. 202.

munication with both sides. The magistrates of Dumfries invited him to enter the town, but he declined on the ground that he was not free in conscience to fight in defence of the present constitution in Church and State, emphasising the "sinful Union" as a main difficulty. Apparently, however, he had given private assurances of loyalty, since his troop was supplied with provisions by the townspeople. As is well known, the Pretender's forces never reached Dumfries, and the Hepburnians or Hebronians, as Macmillan calls them,\* returned home. Hepburn continued his ministry at Urr without disturbance till his death in 1724, aged 70.

The sympathy between Hepburn and Macmillan was most natural, considering how exactly their courses of thought and action coincided from point to point. Hepburn was, of course, much the older man, and had been twenty years ordained before Macmillan. But, like him, he had entered the Revolution Church with high hopes of attaining his dream of a "free and lawfully constituted body." He had been rudely awakened by the speedy development of the compromising spirit which guided the Assemblies of the Church. He had entered on a course of incessant protests and giving in of "grievances," and had been met with suspension and imprisonment. Finally, although a year and a half after Macmillan, he too had been rewarded, for his troublesome conscience, with deposition. So far, his history and Macmillan's were very much the same. From the year 1699, Hepburn also had been in correspondence with Macmillan's Presbytery, not by attending the meetings, but by private conferences arranged by himself. He was therefore fully aware of the agitation proceeding within their bounds. In his *Humble Pleadings*, in fact, he refers to "many conferences be-

\* See *Narrative*. For above particulars regarding Hepburn, I have consulted his *Humble Pleadings*, 1713; *Nicholson's Hist. Gall.*, ii. 377-8; *Wodrow's History*; and others.



twixt us und several ministers in Galloway and Nithsdale, viz., Messrs. J. R., J. M., W. T., in the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright." \* The initials, of course, indicate the three brethren whom we have seen giving in the *Grievances*—John Reid, William Tod, and John Macmillan. Considering Hepburn's evident force of character, and also his age and influence, we can hardly doubt that these *Grievances* were largely inspired by him.

When Macmillan, deserted by his two comrades, or at least cut off from their company, was at length deposed, Hepburn's warm heart went out to the sufferer, and he was charged later on, when himself under libel, with saying: "The night wherein the Presbytery deposed Mr. Macmillan, they were running the devil's errand!" † He broke through his own confinement within the parochial bounds of Urr, to go and preach in Balmaghie church at the invitation of Macmillan and his people, and was accused of taking "violent possession" of the building for the purpose. ‡ It was alleged, too, that he had said, "If I saw the Lady Balmaghie, I would discharge her to let the ministers in at the door, who are sent by the Presbytery to supply there!"

All this shewed how strong a bond of sympathy existed between these two "contenders" for the Church's freedom. Macmillan apparently hoped to form some working union with Hepburn and his followers; but he soon found that they differed irreconcilably regarding the Establishment.

Hepburn has clearly defined the middle position which he never abandoned. In his introduction to the ably-written work already quoted, *Humble Pleadings for the Good Old Way*, he describes the situation with perfect mastery of detail. He divides ecclesiastical parties into three, into which the Cove-

\* *Humble Pleadings*, p. 296.    † *Ibid.*, p. 226, 227.    ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

nanters were split up by the Revolution Settlement. First, there was the party represented by Lining, Shields, and Boyd, who after a faint and formal protest conformed entirely to the Established Church. Secondly, and at the other extreme, stood the United Societies, as represented by their "Informatory Vindication," who "declined" the established judicatories whether civil or sacred, as sinful and defective. "A Third Sort," he adds, "judged it most like to Scripture pattern, to own what was good in both Church and State, and to protest and bear witness against the defections of both, by pleading in face of Judicatories for redress of grievances." \* This was the party sometimes called Hebronites or Hebronians.† To this party Macmillan may be reckoned as having belonged at first, and had his protests been simply received and ignored, as Hepburn's latterly were, he would most likely have lived and died in the church, as Hepburn did. But we know that his very blood was of the purest covenanting strain, and his old associations drew him irresistibly toward the Societies. Having at his deposition publicly refused to own the existing Church Courts, he now found himself disqualified for closer union with Hepburn, and the fruitless negotiations came to an abrupt end.

Immediately Macmillan entered into correspondence anew with the Societies, from whose minutes we shall now gather the discussions which led to his final return to their communion.

On April 5, 1704, less than four months after his deposition, the "General Meeting" at Crawfordjohn considered a letter from Macmillan desiring to have a conference. This was at once granted, and the following Commissioners were chosen to meet him:—James Currie, William Swanston, David Jardine, Robert Douglas, Mr. Stewart, Joseph Francis, Robert Maxwell,

\* *Humble Pleadings*, Introduction.

† In Galloway Scots, Hepburn is still pronounced *Hebbron*.

James Fleming, Francis Graham, John Mack, Mr. Robert Smith, Mr. Charles Umpherston, James Thomson, and the Clerk,—fourteen in all. Most of these afterwards appear as signing his “call.” Those distinguished as “Mr.” were of superior position. “Mr.” Stewart was an elder. Mr. Charles Umpherston was a medical man, and afterwards wrote, among other tracts, the curious one entitled “Observations on a Wolf in a Sheepskin,” 1753.\* Mr. Robert Smith was frequently *preses* of the General Meeting. John Mack, according to a note in the Lochgoin copy of the Minutes, “drew up” with Hepburn’s party, a few months after, so far as “to draw them up and rendezvous them ; after which he did no good, but distempered,” *i.e.* became insane, a melancholy victim of religious enthusiasm.†

This committee doubtless had some meetings with Macmillan, who, however, did not at first deal quite openly with them. The truth is, he was literally “adrift,” as we have styled it ; and he still longed to enjoy pastoral status and settlement among his own people. We have seen that he hated the name of “separatist,” and to a late period he warmly repudiated it. Hence his seeming inconsistencies at this time, which a truthful narrative must not conceal.

On 22nd February, 1704, Macmillan, accompanied by a “considerable number” of his adherents, proceeded to Kirkcudbright, and craved a hearing of the Presbytery there assembled. His object was to inquire, first, whether the ministers absent at the final meeting on December 29-30 adhered to the Presbytery’s act of deposition ; and secondly, whether the sentence would now be rescinded. The Presbytery were somewhat shaken by this demonstration. Tod, who had come in along with the people, rose and gave in his dissent from the deposi-

\* In the New College Collection, Edinburgh.

† Conclusions, Oct. 4, 1704.

tion ; but no other member, out of the seven absentees from the Crossmichael meeting, saw fit to join in this disclaimer. Reid, indeed, was not himself present. The Presbytery, after deliberation in private, recalled the deputation and announced that the first question was incompetent. The deposition had been unanimous, and it was entirely out of order to inquire as to the opinions of absent members. As to the second, they once more demanded his unconditional submission, which he "waved or declined" to give. Immediately the Presbytery intimated that they had decided to refer the whole case to the General Assembly on March 16, and cited Macmillan to appear before that Court. Here, again, the Presbytery's procedure was unusual, not in referring the case, but in taking upon them to cite one of their number to a superior court.

Macmillan disregarded this incompetent citation, and the Assembly then itself required his attendance at the Commission in June, 1704. He went to Edinburgh accordingly, and after some conference signed the following paper :—

"I, John Macmillan, hereby acknowledge my great sin in deserting the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, as also my great sin in declining the said Presbytery, these things being contrary to my ordination engagements. And seeing I do hereby promise and engage (in the strength of God) to live more orderly and in subjection to the judicatories of the Church, and to use my utmost endeavours to maintain unity, concord, and peace therein, I earnestly desire the reverend Commission may take my case to consideration, and repon me to the exercise of my ministry at Balmaghie. In witness whereof I have subscribed these presents with my hand, at Edinburgh, this eleventh day of July, 1704 years.

*"Sic subscribitur, J. MACKMILLAN."*

As the Commission met on 9th June, a whole month had been consumed in reaching this final arrangement. Part of this time, Macmillan occupied in preparing his *True Narrative*,

which, like all the tractates in this controversy, was issued anonymously, and in the third person.\* He did not, however, send it to the press until he had lost hope of the Commission reponing him. It was in this hope, and with this understanding, that he put his name to a paper so ill fitted to strengthen his position, and so often used against him on all hands in the immediate future.

His former colleagues, for instance, at once industriously circulated the charge, that he had "disowned what he formerly owned, and reckoned it a great sin." This, he himself declares, "is a downright and manifest untruth."† "It is known," he adds, "what litigation there was about that word *sin*." He declares that all he meant was to admit, for the sake of a peaceable settlement, that he did wrong to absent himself from meetings, and to repudiate the Presbytery as a court. As to the expression, "any other thing in my way that hath given offence," he asserts that, when handing in his paper, he explained openly that he considered that the expression might cover both "some things bad and some things good." The view which he evidently took was, that he was simply apologising, but not in any way retracting. On the whole, this seems a fair enough meaning to be put on the document, although such phrases as "great sin" twice repeated, and "these sins," are and were unhappily capable of a more serious application.

Macmillan's chief excuse, however, lay in the manifest fact that the apology or "submission" was meant to be a *quid pro*

\* Cameron, in his *Examination*, p. 7, says:—"Though the Narrative . . . speaks of him as a third person, yet the judicious who know him will judge him to be the author thereof." As proofs, he appeals to internal evidence, and also to the testimony of "Two Brethren," to whom Macmillan read over a paper exactly similar at Kirkcudbright. Further, Cameron points out that, as announced at the close of the *Narrative*, Macmillan resumed preaching immediately after it appeared.

† *Narrative*, Appendix.

*quo.* He understood that it was the price exacted for his re-instatement as minister of Balmaghie. And he argues, quite reasonably from a business point of view, that as the Commission did not re-instate him, he was consequently released from the whole terms of the compact. "*Quum aufertur ratio formalis juramenti, juramentum cessat ratione eventus.*"\* As soon as the condition of an engagement is taken away, that engagement itself lapses by circumstances. "If you will repon me, I promise submission": such is the gist of the paper. He was not reponed, and how then could he submit? In this light, it may be held that the "submission" was obtained under false pretences. And this, in fact, was Macmillan's own feeling.

The publication of the *True Narrative*, and his immediate resumption of preaching, did not mend his chance of indulgent treatment at the next Commission, December, 1704, to which he addressed a "Protest and Appeal by John Macmillan, unjustly deposed." This was an anticipation of the fuller "Protestation, Declinature, and Appeal," sent to the Assembly in 1708, of which a copy will be found in the Appendix. It demanded a hearing of the entire case, "*a capite ad calcem.*" It retracted his pledges given in June and July. And it renewed his former appeal to the first "free, faithful, and right constitute" General Assembly, protesting also against his being further disturbed in the "free and peaceable exercise of his ministry."†

Two doors had thus been closed in his face. Hepburn he could not join with, and the Church of his ordination would not take him back. There remained only the associates of his boyhood and college days, the people of the "Societies." He now applied himself resolutely to the task of securing re-admission to their fold.

\* *Narrative.*

† Thorburn's *Vindiciæ Magistratûs*, p. 228, 229.

On January 31, 1705, he repaired to the General Meeting at Crawfordjohn, and was admitted to conference. As might have been expected, the recent "submission" was found to be "very grievous and lamentable." This the assembled "correspondents" plainly told him, and he at once expressed his "resentment," or repentance, for the injudicious step, but declared his willingness now to join with the Societies, and read a statement of his views.

A further and longer conference took place at Holstane, February 13, 1706. It was not till August 14, however, that the negotiations began to draw near an end. At the meeting that day at Crawfordjohn, Macmillan said, "I desire to know the meeting's satisfaction with what is already past." The answer was—"The meeting, as one man, is satisfied with what is past betwixt him and them."\* Macmillan, in fact, had been subjected to a searching examination and a kind of training, during the space of nearly two years. His statements and pledges were most ample, and shewed a complete conformity to the Societies' standards. But, in order to make his new position perfectly clear, he agreed to sign first a "submission," and then a solemn "approbation." These, we copy here from the Society's minute-book :—

*"Mr. John Macmillan's Submission.*

"I, Mr. John Macmillan, minister in Balmaghie, having displeased the Godly Remnant and greatly offended them, and that in my leaving them when then joined with them, and also since, in tampering with the ministers after I had declined them, which I desire to lament : do oblige myself, for Truth's vindication, and the Godly Remnant's satisfaction, to stand to the determination of any faithful, constituted Church Judicatory of Christ within this land, when it shall happen to be, which they and I can own, submit to, and concur with, according to the

\* Conclusions, Aug. 14, 1706.



comely order of this Church in her best times, in whatever hath been sinful in my walk, way, or carriage, ever since I left them to this very day. As witness my hand at Crawfordjohn, the 14th day of August, 1706.

*sic subscr.* J. M'MILLAN."

Next day, he signed the second paper referred to:—

*"Mr. John Macmillan's Approbation of our Testimony.*

"I, Mr. John Macmillan, minister in Balmaghie, heartily approve of, consent to, and comply with all the Testimonies that have been carried on with respect to the Covenanted Reformation, and that both in the bypast and present times, by the honest, godly, and faithful Remnant against both Church and State; as they were and are agreeable to the Word of God and Covenanted work of Reformation. As witness my hand at Crawfordjohn, the 15th day of August, 1706.

*sic subscr.* J. M'MILLAN."

The final stage was not reached till October 9, 1706, when the following "call" was drawn up and signed:—

*"The Call.*

"We, undersubscribers of the United Societies and General Correspondences of the Suffering Remnant of the true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, England, and Ireland, having of a long time been deprived of the public administration of the Gospel ordinances in purity, by reason of the manifold defections and backslidings of the ministers in these lands:

"And now, it hath pleased the Lord, after sundry emergents of Providence, due deliberation, and conferences, with you, Mr. John Macmillan, minister of the Gospel at Balmaghie, that you be of one judgment with us as to the present Testimony of the day for carrying on the Covenanted work of Reformation:

"Do hereby, in our name, and in the name of all our United Societies and Correspondences, give you our hearty and unanimous call to come forth and dispense the Gospel ordinances faithfully and freely to us;

"And we promise to hear and subject ourselves unto you as our faithful leader and pastor, to whom we may safely commit



the charge of our souls, and to do every other thing that precept, or former practice to a minister in the like case, can oblige persons in our circumstances, while you continue to go on the exercise thereof.

“And take this our Call to your serious deliberation, and return us an answer according to our urgent necessity, and we shall desire to pray for a blessing to you and us both with it.

“As witness our hands at Crawfordjohn, October 10th, 1706.

(Signed) John Currie, <i>elder</i> .	Chas. Umpherston.
Will. Stewart, <i>elder</i> .	James Brington.
David Jardin.	Duncan Forbes.
James Mundell.	Jo. M'Vay.
John Bell.	Will Swanston.
John Glover.	Jo. Hislop.
Thomas Brown.	Jo. Greive.
Jo. Robson.	Jas. Donaldson.
John Bryce.	James Cargill.
Will. Hannah.	Francis Graham.
John Knox.	Robert Barrie.
Joseph Francis.	Robert Maxwell.
Hugh Dickie.	John Muir.
James Currie.	Jo. Stanley.
	Jo. Paterson.
	Thomas Milns.
	Robert Smith, <i>preses</i> .
	Robt. Hamilton, <i>clerk</i> .”

Thirty-two names in all appear above. From Mr. J. H. Thomson's notes regarding them, some interesting particulars may be gleaned.\*

John Currie, whose name heads the list, had been “cast out of house and hold in Tinwald, Dumfries-shire, for not complying with prelacy.” He drew up a curious personal “covenant” with God, which is reprinted in the *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine* for 1869. It was taken at “Carse of the Water of Ae, Sept. 15, 1681.”

\* *Ref. Presb. Mag.*, 1869.

Charles Umpherston had been intended for the ministry, and was one of four young men chosen by the Societies in 1699 to be sent at their expense to Holland, in order to obtain license and ordination. The establishment, however, of full communion between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland rendered this design null, and Umpherston became a "surgeon" in Pentland. He was the most active literary agent of the Societies. His quaint tract on the *Wolf in a Sheepskin* has already been referred to, and is the sole existing authority on Macmillan's last days. We shall have occasion ere long to reproduce its very touching record of these closing moments. Umpherston died in 1758, aged 80.

James Currie also lived in Pentland. His name may be read on the Martyrs' Monument in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh. "*This tomb was erected by James Currie, Merchant in Pentland, and others.*" Both he and his wife, Helen Alexander, left behind them short autobiographies, or "Passages" in their lives, which are extant in a printed form. They had been married by Renwick, and in the wife's little narrative the following occurs, which Mr. J. H. Thomson quotes:—

"And when Mr. Renwick was execute, I went and saw him in prison. And I said to him, *Ye will get the white robes*; and he said, *And palms in my hands*. And when he was execute, I went into the Greyfriars' Yard, and I took him in my arms till his clothes were taken off, and I helped to wind him before he was put in his coffin."

Robert Smith, who presided on this memorable occasion, had studied at Glasgow and Groningen, where he took his degree. He transcribed many of Guthrie and Cargill's sermons for the Lochgoin Collection. At a later date he withdrew from Macmillan's ministry, on the ground of an alleged "sinful acknowledgment" of George I. He and James Mundell, another signatory, are in Calderwood's *Dying Testimonies*.

This call was "heartily received" by Macmillan, and taken to "consideration." It was not, however, till about the end of 1706 that he finally acceded to the urgent request of the Societies, and fixed a time and place for his first sermon as their minister. On December 2, 1706, the people assembled at Crawfordjohn.\* It was in the depth of winter, and very near the dark time of his recent deposition, that he solemnly took up this new and larger work. There was a "numerous congregation from all airths, and a pleasant day of the Gospel; and on the Monday, preaching also, with baptizing of sundry children." It was sixteen years since any ordained minister had been qualified to labour among the "Remnant," and there was much to do, especially in the way of baptizing children of these out-of-date Covenanters. So, on the "clamant call of the people," Macmillan for a season forgot his troubles at Balmaghie, and went about preaching and baptizing, and "exercising also the other parts of his ministerial function"—*i.e.*, marrying, visiting the sick, performing funeral services, and the like. There were "many signs and tokens of his Master's presence," and his heart must have rejoiced in the growing usefulness opened up before him. As yet, such was the awe associated with the Lord's Supper, that no attempt was made at a celebration of it. That was to come later. But, meantime, it is refreshing to pause and contemplate the important and encouraging sphere in which Macmillan had at last found himself placed.

It might be said, fitly enough,

*Per tot casus, per tot discrimina rerum,*

his storm-tossed bark had at last secured a port, and his anchor was let down in ground where it held for 47 chequered years. Doubtless, many vicissitudes still awaited him. It was no easy life, no "fat slumbers," as Gibbon phrased it, that he had

\* See *Observations on a Wolf in a Sheepskin*, p. 39.

chosen. But it was a career for which nature and grace and early training had all prepared him. To be the "apostle" of the Remnant, as we have ventured to style him, or the "high-priest," as Cunningham expresses it, was to undertake a life of apostolic wanderings and hardships. Some parts of St. Paul's famous description might be applied in a measure to his future experience:—" . . . in journeyings often . . . in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."\* But his early days, among the shepherds and on the hills of Kells and Minnigaff, had made him physically able to face the work: and divine grace had endued him with the passion of helpfulness, of which his motto was the outward and visible sign—" *Miseris succurrere disco*," "I am learning to succour the wretched." And in his own sturdy, deeply earnest soul, he was already equipped with the mental and moral qualities needed for his great parish or diocese, extending over nearly half of Scotland. Also, he was back again among his own people, in whose religious ways and phrases he was entirely at home. After so many vague and even inconsistent movements, he had at length, in a significant phrase, "found himself."

\* 2 Cor., xi. 26-28.

## CHAPTER X.

1704-1727.

### A PARISH SCHISM.

Monteith deforced—Preaches at Balmaghie Place—Macmillan's silence—Resumes preaching—Scene on river bank—War of pamphlets—The "True Narrative"—Cameron's "Examination" of it—Macmillan's reply—Judicial proceedings—A meeting of parties at Clachanpluck—Attempt to buy him out—His indignant letter—A year's stipend from "Balmaghie's curators" to the late minister's children—Macmillan's stipend—Conference of heritors and Presbytery at Clachanpluck—Interrupted by Macmillanites—The Sheriff baffled—Another riverside scene—The Sheriff's guard repulsed by women—Complicity of the Societies in the riots—Macmillan marries Jean Gemble—Sends in his "Declinature" to the Commission—Is excommunicated along with Macneil—M'Kie, chaplain at Balmaghie, is called—Scene at his ordination—Charges brought against him—The Sheriff twice again repulsed by women—Collision between Macmillan and M'Kie—M'Kie takes possession—The Glebe Riot—The "Porteous Roll"—"House of Rimmon" built—Macmillan leaves the parish—His relations with M'Kie—Meaning of "*alter* minister"—The Schism is healed—Number of "Cameronians" in 1794.

LET us now return to the parish of Balmaghie, which had been thrown into violent excitement by the Presbytery's summary deposition of its beloved and popular minister. We have seen how a large body of Macmillan's parishioners attended him to the meeting of Presbytery at Kirkcudbright on February 22, 1704. But previous to this, the people had begun a series of demonstrations showing their absolute resolve to resist the authority of that court.

When the 9th of January 1704 came round, Monteith and Hay failed to carry out their appointment, Hay having fallen sick, and Monteith probably shrinking from the perilous duty of "preaching the church vacant." Monteith was now ordered to proceed alone, but at the meeting above mentioned, he brought back a melancholy report. On Sunday, 30th January, "he went towards the Kirk of Balmaghie according to appointment, and James Gordon, Town-Clerk of Kirkcudbright, notary public, together with some witnesses." As "he was riding towards the kirk, there came from the kirkyard about 20 or 30 men, who refused to let him go further, and actually stopped them by laying hold on the foremost horse's bridle, whereupon Mr. Monteith, finding he was violently withstood in going to the kirk, did take out his commission from the Presbytery, and did read it to them, and did intimate the Presbytery's sentence of deposition, and declared the kirk vacant. Whereupon, he asked and took instruments in the hands of the notary public."

Monteith then retired to Balmaghie Place, where he "preached to such as were present," and again intimated the sentence. Macmillan himself officiated as usual in the parish church.

Warner and Gordon reported that they also had been denied access, and had preached at Balmaghie Place. Spalding, on arriving in the parish to "supply" the pulpit, learned that Macmillan had exchanged with Hepburn, and was at Urr. He made no attempt to enter Balmaghie Church, but conducted service at the mansion house, like his predecessors. He reported, that Hepburn had "used much railing against the Church and the Presbytery in particular," and had exhorted the people to adhere to the deposed minister.

From this point, the Presbytery's "supplies" contented themselves with preaching at Balmaghie House, except for a brief interval of a few months, during which Macmillan remained silent, in some hopes, as it would seem, of being reponed under



EARLSTON CASTLE, ORKNEY. 25213 dk

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EARLSTON TOWER.

*Photographed by  
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his engagement of July, 1704. While he was waiting in Edinburgh for some decisive answer, the Presbytery sent two ministers to announce to the people that during his absence they were to attend on the Presbytery's ministrations. But the keys of the church could not be had, and they had to enter by breaking in a window.\* Macmillan returned from Edinburgh, and for a few Sundays sat in his place in church as one of the congregation. But at last, losing all hope of being restored, he rose up one Sunday after the officiating minister had intimated the preacher for the Sunday following, and had urged the people to attend better. Macmillan now announced that he would himself preach next Sunday.

"What," said his colleague from the pulpit, "will you, a deposed man, go and preach? Go home," he added to the people, "and mourn for it, that a deposed man is going to preach next Sunday. I wish he may get few hearers, and I hope so he will!"

Next Sunday the church was crowded. A boat was seen coming across the river carrying the Presbytery "supply." Immediately a rush was made to the bank, and a dozen strong hands violently shoved the boat back from the landing-place. The "supply" retired to the Crossmichael bank while the "deposed" man now resumed his office.†

From this day Macmillan continued to be in all respects minister of the parish. The Presbytery several times attempted to persuade him to submit, and even threatened the terrible penalty of "greater excommunication."‡ But that threat had no terrors for a minister whose parishioners adhered to him nearly as one man. Practically, he was left in possession, the

\* So J. H. Thomson, in *R. P. Mag.*, 1869; *MS. Narrative*.

† Hutchison's *History*, p. 147; *MS. Narrative*.

‡ *Pres. Rec.*, June 27. 1705.

Presbytery ceasing to go through the empty form of sending "supplies" for a pulpit which was so entirely shut against them.

The publication of Macmillan's *Narrative* had not tended to smooth matters on either side. Although the Presbytery employed its best pens to answer this vigorous assault, the reply was probably of little avail where it was most needed. Cameron, who prepared this document,\* as convener of a committee, had previously issued a "Letter to the Parishioners of Balmaghie," briefly and contemptuously noticed in a few lines † at the close of the *Narrative*. The Presbytery also employed the printing-press to circulate copies of the "Answers to the Grievances," and of Libel and grounds of Sentence. But Macmillan proved an active literary combatant. He returned to the charge in 1706, in a pamphlet of 28 octavo pages, entitled, *The Examination of the True Narrative Tried and found False*. In this, he denies the personal insinuations, with which Cameron had seasoned his work. He declares that he "was educat in the Presbyterian Perswasion," and that his "Parents suffered much for their adherence to these Principles in the time of Prelacy, which Principles he still retains." This fact about his parents, he declares, "is well-known," although Cameron had asserted that it was known to the brethren that Macmillan had been "from a boy a Separatist."

The frequent reflections in Cameron's pamphlet upon Macmillan's want of scholarship are passed over, but the deadlier charge that he had entered the State Church for a livelihood is vehemently denied. ‡ A full explanation is given of the immediate reasons which led him to "decline" the Presbytery. "Let the LORD GOD of Gods be witness, let Angels be witness, his own Conscience, and the Ministers of the

\* viz., the Pamphlet intituled, *A True Narrative Examined and Found False*. 1705.

† See Appendix.

‡ *Examination Tried and Found False*, p. 26.

Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, at the Bar of God's Tribunal, let them be witnesses, if it was not purely out of Love to the Interest of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and Conscience of duty, that upon the sight and consideration of the two Acts of the Synod of Wigton . . . he was moved to express himself so openly against joining with the Presbytery." The "two Acts" are described, one being given in full, at page 5 of his tract. The first was that which directed active measures to be taken with the three protesting brethren. It will be found in our account of the "Grievances." The second directed the ministers to renew the National Covenant, but pointedly ignored the Solemn League. \* These pronouncements, he says, led him to judge "them to be going to a top-height of defection."

Light is also thrown, by this spirited defence, on the exasperating conduct of Cameron and his party after they had succeeded in deposing Macmillan. It appears that, in October 1705, they tried to persuade him to "deliver up the keys of the Church to the Presbytery, and let them have free access there to preach, and himself to lie by for a time."† If he did so, they assured him that he might expect "reposition." But he had long since lost confidence in such promises. "Once bit, twice shy." His damaging submission or apology in July 1704, had been wrung from him on the same understanding, yet he was still under the sentence of deposition. He had "lain by" for several months in that year, without seeing any progress made in his affair. Nothing more deeply wounds an earnest man, than the experience of what he deems to be perfidy or trickery at the hands of his neighbours. The events which must now be related can be better explained, though not perhaps fully justified, if we remember that Macmillan and his people held themselves

\* Macmillan had induced his people to renew *both* the National Covenant, and the Solemn League.

† Exam. Tried, etc., p. 12.

to be the victims of injustice and treachery on the part of the Presbytery. In resisting that authority, they believed that they were defending their rights against an unscrupulous and tyrannical power.

The war of pamphlets was followed by a more formidable series of judicial proceedings. In April, 1706, the Assembly's Agent procured a summons against Macmillan and his immediate adherents to appear before the Privy Council, but this having been disobeyed, they were declared fugitives, and rendered liable to fine and imprisonment. Before putting the law in force, however, the Assembly directed their Moderator to endeavour to effect an accommodation. At his instance, a conference of heritors, elders, and people was convened at "a public-house in the centre of the parish," probably at Clachan-pluck. The heritors urged the people to yield, or "else there would certainly be put a party of dragoons in amongst them." Macmillan was not present, but as soon as he heard of this attempt to terrify his people, he sent notice that he refused to give up the keys of the church. Upon this, it is said that one of the heritors suggested the payment to him of "so much of the by-gone stipends, as would be a subsistence to him and his family, if he would go away for good and all." This provoked a curt and stern reply from Macmillan :—" *Sir, Let your money perish with you ! I am not going to make merchandise of my ministry. I do not say, perish yourself ; but your money.*"\*

Thus, the attempt to settle the dispute had failed at both points. The people would not be frightened into deserting their minister ; and he, in his turn, indignantly refused to accept a bribe and desert them.

The year 1707 saw several further developments. It is re-

\* This and some subsequent incidents, are from the MS. narrative already referred to. The above letter seems genuine enough.

corded in a minute of the Presbytery about January of that year, that "Balmaghie and his curators have given the gift of a year's vacant stipend to Mr. M'Millan's children." These were the children of the first Macmillan, who died in 1700. The entry is noteworthy as shewing that the principal estate was now in the hands of a minor, whose guardians or "curators" did all in their power to make the deposed minister's position untenable. As we have seen, Balmaghie House was granted as the centre for public worship. The Holy Communion was celebrated there, according to Monteith's curious statement quoted on a previous page. The stipend was withheld from Macmillan, and only one year is tardily yielded up by the "curators" to relieve the destitute children of Macmillan's predecessor and namesake. The other heritors probably acted in the like fashion, and retained the annual dues. The MS. narrative says that some of the non-resident heritors forbade their tenants to give Macmillan any help in working the glebe, or to lead his pents: and that they "also took up the teinds in the fore-end of their rents, when paid, and what was behind was to be so much rent resting. This they did, lest the ground should sink with the weight of teinds lying upon it, and they took this method to prevent it." The passage is obscure, but it is clear that many of the heritors pocketed the stipend at this time, without giving even a year's teind as a dole for widows and orphans of the Church. It may safely be assumed that, from the date of his deposition, Macmillan's income fell by at least one half, and continued to sink gradually as one heritor after another ceased to pay the stipend, to which, of course, he had now no legal claim.

As late as 1713 Macmillan is alleged by Wodrow\* to have taken the "very odd step" of sending agents round to "poind for the teind which he alleges is owing to him." We may therefore conclude that after that date he received little or nothing by

\* *Analecta*, II. 239.

way of stipend, and that his sole emoluments, apart from the "Societies," consisted of manse and glebe. It is the more important to note this, that it has sometimes been supposed that Macmillan continued to receive the full stipend for years after he was legally entitled to it. So far as his pecuniary interests were concerned, however, he had small inducement to remain in his present position.

In 1707 the heritors unfavourable to Macmillan had a conference with representatives of the Presbytery "in an inn near the centre of the parish," in order to concert methods for expelling him by legal means. The people again flocked together, "armed," says the MS. Narrative, "with swords and pistols," and took possession of the inn. The heritors and ministers, thus themselves driven out, met in the open air, but they were at once joined by the people, who had, however, left their arms in the inn. A dangerous collision, and perhaps much bloodshed, were thus avoided. The Presbytery deputies remonstrated, and hinted that their next visit would be better protected from such interruptions. "An elder spoke out—'Indeed, you may bring in the dragoons, no doubt, and raise a new persecution, which still proceeds from the corrupt clergy.' " Warner, the "father" of the Presbytery, addressed the crowd, severely rebuking them for their departure from the Confession of Faith. He was promptly attacked in turn by "an old elder," who cried—"But *you* are going contrair to the Confession! We know *you* long ago, and any honest man that will appear for the honest cause, be sure you will employ your powers to the utmost to knock that one upon the head. Do you mind how you sat a member in that Presbytery which sat at Sondagwall and Dundrigh \* upon

\* In the *Scots Worthies*, edit. 1781, p. 403, it is *Dunigh* and *Sundewal*. Dunigh was "in Galloway," and Sundewal "in Dunscore in Nithsdale." Howie describes these as meetings of the "indulged," of whom Warner was one.

Mr. Richard Cameron, in order to depose him? And now you are going on against Mr. Macmillan in your persecuting breath!"

This reply led to a rejoinder, and a long and heated discussion ensued, with the usual result that "some said that we wan, and some said that they wan." According to the contemporary narrative, "some of the lairds said *for* to it, that the Whigs had carried the day." At all events, the so-called "Whigs," as the Macmillanites were now dubbed, were left in possession of the field of verbal battle.

The next incident took place on the river bank near the church, at the beginning of the year 1708. The Steward or Sheriff Depute arrived by boat accompanied by a notary public, to "put Mr. Macmillan out of his hot nest." A body of the people met him and prevented him from landing, at the same time giving in to the notary a protest, largely signed, against the Sheriff's further proceeding. That official accordingly retired as he came, but immediately issued peremptory summons to the heritors of "twelve parishes," requiring them to assemble at Carlingwark, now Castle Douglas, on a certain day in August, under a penalty of £50 Scots. Accordingly, about 100 persons attended him on horseback, "going three abreast," one of the officers or constables carrying new locks for the church "in a bag." The cavalcade rode on unmolested until they approached the church. There they found two large bodies assembled to oppose their further progress. One of these consisted of men, and was posted around the church. The other was composed entirely of women, with the exception of "three men to accompany the women and hand the Depute a fresh protest." The Sheriff now gave the word of command—"Forward!" But "a gentlewoman, taller in person than many ordinary men, laid hold on the Depute, seizing the horse's bridle, and another woman by the other side checked his progress." The "gentle-



woman" said, "Sir, you need not insist in that affair, for by no means we will allow you in such an action as you are about." The perplexed Sheriff-Depute could not ride down a mob of women. Once more he confessed himself beaten, saying:—"Let them employ their sojers: I am not obliged to fight for it." He then gave a fresh order, "Right-about," and ignominiously retreated, with his horsemen and "new locks in a bag."

From the description of the "gentlewoman" in this remarkable scene, it may be shrewdly suspected that that person was a man disguised in female apparel. In William Wilson's "Steps of Defection," given in at Glengeith on August 2, 1721, the fourth "step" is "the trying to keep Mr. Macmillan in possession of Balmaghie and concurring with that parish from several shires," in order to oppose the Presbytery and "Justices of the Peace." If we accept this charge, the inference is that the "Societies" had lent their aid in resisting the law, by sending members of their body to swell the threatening mob at the church. It seems likely enough, that the prolonged and successful resistance at Balmaghie was not made by the people of the parish unaided. That which overawed and discomfited the authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, was the fact that, all over Galloway and in Dumfriesshire and Ayrshire, there were bodies of men prepared to act on the old Cameronian lines, by making, if necessary, armed demonstrations against Macmillan's ejection.

This is no mere conjecture, startling as the statement may seem. In the Societies' minute at Crawfordjohn, May 3, 1708, there is an entry which has a significant air in this connection:—"Concluded, that each man capable in our Societies provide arms sufficient, and have them always in good case, with ammunition conformable; and that each correspondence supply those that are not able to furnish themselves. Likewise, that some be appointed in each correspondence to sight the arms and ammunition, *and the foresaids to be kept private till further*



*allowance and necessity.*" The italics are mine. In the same minute, a conference was adjusted between Hepburn's party and a committee of the "General Meeting," and Macmillan was one of the latter. It seems hardly credible, that these military preparations, and this attempt to form an alliance with the warlike Hepburn, had no reference to the struggle going on at that very hour in Balmaghie. We need not make too much of the extraordinary fact thus disclosed, that the United Societies were in reality secret military organisations, not indeed in any high degree of equipment or discipline, but quite a match for the officers of the law. There was nothing new in this aspect of the Society movement, except what arose from the more settled government, and the dawning improvement in the conditions of social order and religious freedom. Ever since Richard Cameron and his horsemen rode into Sanquhar and declared war against a king, it had become a tradition in the scattered covenanting bodies to hold themselves ready for the defence of life and liberty. Cameron, it is true, fought openly and fell with his brother Michael at Airdsmoss; but the Revolution had made such overt action not only impossible, but unnecessary. Persecution was at an end, at least in the old dragooning style. Such arming and training, as were still kept up, must be secret, since otherwise public opinion would have condemned it. Public opinion, in point of fact, brought about very shortly the entire abandonment of the military elements in these Societies and Correspondences. William Wilson, whom we have just quoted, makes it a "step of defection," that arms were not taken to the Auchensaugh gathering in 1712. In 1708, however, it is important to remember, that Macmillan had at his back not only the great majority of the people of Balmaghie, but an armed force which Gordon of Earlston, in 1683, estimated at 7000 men.\*

\* Hutchison's *Hist.*, p. 63.

This year 1708 was in many ways eventful for Macmillan and his cause. We have seen how the Sheriff and his yeomanry made a vain assault on his position, some time in August. Between that date and November following, we must record three interesting events—his marriage to Jean Gemble, a lady about ten years his junior; his solemn act of protest and “declinature,” handed in to the Commission of Assembly on 29th September, and that reverend body’s response in its “Act” against Macmillan and Macneil on 1st October. The marriage ceremony was performed by Reid of Carsphairn, who was now like Tod, more or less reconciled to the ecclesiastical *status quo*, but did not refuse to help his old brother in controversy at this interesting moment. Jean Gemble may possibly also have been a Carsphairn woman. The “Declinature” was Macmillan’s final withdrawal from the State Church, and although signed also by John Macneil, a “preacher of the gospel,” now acting as his coadjutor, it was most probably the composition of Macmillan himself. It will be found in the appendix, and is an important document in the history of Reformed Presbyterianism. The most striking feature for us, in our present narrative, is its renewed and emphatic declaration, that they were not “schismatics, separatists, despisers of the Gospel,” and the appeal once more to what Cameron styled an “imaginary tribunal,” the first “free, faithful, and rightly constitute Assembly in the Church.”

The Commission’s response might have been anticipated, when so bold a defiance was dated from “Balmaghie Manse,” which the writer held by force against its authority. The “Act against Mr. John Macmillan and Mr. John Macneil” does not mince matters. The two offenders are declared to be “none of the Communion of this Church.” They are threatened with the “highest censure,” *i.e.*, excommunication. The Act is ordered to be read from the pulpits of all the parishes “where the fore-

said Schismatics doe mostly frequent." Accordingly, we find it minuted by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, on December 14, that the "brethren" had duly read it.

For some time, William M'Kie, a student and licentiate of the Presbytery, had been "chaplain" at Balmaghie House. He was frequently employed to "supply" the vacant pulpit, conducting services chiefly at the mansion, but occasionally in "different corners."\* At length, on November 8, 1709, three of the elders of Balmaghie, George M'Guffog, Alexander Charters, and Alexander Macmillan, petitioned the Presbytery to consider his claims to become the parish minister. The Presbytery had, for several months before, been in negotiation with Gabriel Wilson, an Edinburgh licentiate, but for some reason, he had not responded to their invitation to "come into the country."† This petition betrayed a falling off in Macmillan's faithful band of elders. Of the three who laid it before the Presbytery, two, M'Guffog and Charters, had signed the "people's paper" in December, 1703.‡ But they now declared openly for the Established Church, and their request that M'Kie might be appointed was granted,§ and the usual formalities were begun.

At length the day of ordination came, but that solemn ceremony could not safely be held at Balmaghie, and it was therefore transferred to Kirkcudbright. The date was October 12, 1710, and the ordination was not completed without two unusual interruptions. The people had already demonstrated their strong opposition to M'Kie's settlement by another tumultuous

\* *MS. Narrative.* † See Pres. Rec., Jan. 1708, and following meetings.

‡ Gabriel Wilson was a *protégé* of the "Laird of Duchra," whose factor was a Robert Macmillan.

§ Two of them were probably tenants on the Balmaghie estate. M'Guffog, as we have seen, was in Drumlane; Charters in Dornal; and Macmillan perhaps in Barend. There was a John Macmillan there in 1772. See *Kirk Above Dee Water*, p. 66.

gathering. It was known one day that Cameron was on his way from Kirkcudbright to "moderate" in M'Kie's call. At Barnboard farm, on the parish border, a crowd of Macmillan's adherents met him and "turned him back." This was followed by a formal protest against M'Kie being settled as minister, signed by "Hugh Mitchell, John Cunzie, William Cairns, and others," to the number of "84 heads of families, besides young men." \* M'Kie's own call had been signed by only nine persons, chiefly heritors and elders. These facts promised ill for a quiet settlement, and accordingly, the proceedings at Kirkcudbright were twice interrupted. The first difficulty arose when the usual church-door intimation was made, calling for objections against M'Kie's "life, conversation, and doctrine." Immediately the tenant of Barnboard farm, John Cunie or Cunzie (the John M'Kine who "*aught this ston*" in 1731) appeared and made two distinct charges of intoxication, saying that M'Kie, "in June was a year, came from the Water of Dee riding on ane horse, and rode back and forward through the Croft of Thrieve-mains, and could not keep the highway nor sit well upon his Horse, and after he came out of Bearcroft, he wheeled off the rod upon the height of the leys, and held up his hand and cryed Ha ! Ha ! as if he had had Dogs, but had none ; and rod as fast as the horse could carry him to Balmaghie." This ludicrous charge was corroborated by four witnesses. The second count was equally absurd, being that, "in winter last, Mr. M'Kie was preaching in Clachanpluck upon a Lord's Day, and he and some of his hearers, after preaching, stayed in Clachanpluck-house and drank Ale and Brandy, but could not give an account of the Quantity thereof, and came home to Balmaghie within Night, and did neither take supper or goe about Family Worship that night. Witnesses : Balmaghie's servants."

\* *MS. Narrative.*

M'Kie had an easy task in rebutting such wretchedly feeble attacks, as well as a further charge made by "Robert Cochran in Collain" (now Cullenoch), that he had called his wife and certain other women a very vile name. M'Kie denied the Threave Mains incident "*simpliciter*." He admitted, however, that "after sermon he took a Drink with Balmaghie, Garvarie, and some other gentlemen, but came timously to Balmaghie and went about Family Worship without the least disorder, as he used to doe." As to the charge of calling names, he explains that "he rod to Grennoch (Woodhall) before the Lady Balmaghie," and while strolling on "the green" there, was hailed with cries of "Rascal! Villain! and the like," by "Four Women making a Hideous Noise." He admitted calling them "furious fools," but nothing worse.

The Presbytery took needless trouble in hearing such ridiculous accusations. At length they found that there was no cause for delay.\* They were, however, a second time interrupted. Macmillan himself appeared, with a paper which he desired might be read at once. They decided against this, and remitted it to a committee; whereupon he "took instruments in the Clerk's hands, and so went off." All impediments having thus been brushed aside, Telfair ascended the pulpit and preached a sermon about the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. Concerning which, one can imagine a caustic critic, in the light of after events, remarking, that M'Kie perhaps needed to be assured of a heavenly tabernacle, since he speedily found much difficulty in securing an earthly one.

The ordination was followed by repeated efforts to dislodge Macmillan. A new Sheriff had been appointed, and one day he arrived at the "change-house" in Crossmichael, bent on

\* Wodrow (*Anal.* I., 315) says the accusers were "seized and sent to prison."

assailing the position in the rear. The women of the little clachan, however, were on the alert. They seized his officers as soon as they landed, and stripped them of their warrants. Then they rowed them back to Crossmichael, and dismissed them with a warning not to return. A second time the gallant Sheriff made an attempt, but once more the women drove him back.\*

In the *Fasti*, a discreditable story is recorded that, in 1711, Macmillan and M'Kie encountered each other at a funeral, and that the former "struck at him (M'Kie)," being joined in this assault by "his wife and many other women, who cried 'Kill the dog!'" Jean Gemble, however (Macmillan's first wife), died on June 12th, 1711, and the story is one which has an air of unreality. Still, the passions of even women were at fever heat over the vexed question, and a similar, but worse, charge of violent assault was brought against M'Kie himself, as will be seen shortly.

In 1712 Macmillan was frequently absent on the Society work, and the Auchensaugh meeting kept him from home for a considerable time. M'Kie took the opportunity to gain an entrance to the church and manse. In the latter he is said to have gone through the form of solemnly putting out the fire and kindling it again in his own name, while Macmillan's domestics looked sullenly on. Proceeding to the glebe, M'Kie's companions "dug up earth and stones, delivering the same to Mr. M'Kie, and warned the servants not to labour any more upon the ground, and to flit and remove from the manse and glebe."

Macmillan's absence was misunderstood by Wodrow,† who regarded it as a final retreat, and accounted for this movement by the fact that the heritors were no longer paying him stipend. But we know that long ere this Macmillan had ceased to receive stipend from the laird of Balmaghie and other leading heritors. And that he had not, by any means, given up the struggle,

\* *MS. Narrative.*

† *Analecta*, II., 88.

appeared very soon after, when M'Kie and his supporters attempted to plough the glebe. This was on Dec. 9th, 1713, and I have already referred to the incident as the "Glebe Riot." It was the most violent scene yet witnessed in this series of disorders. The appearance of "five ploughs," guarded by "two men with guns," was the signal for a rush by the Macmillan party. They were met undauntedly by M'Kie's men, and "sticks and stones were freely used." The "cords of the ploughs were cut, and dogs hounded on the intruders." M'Kie, who was himself on the ground, is said to have knocked a woman down, "stamping his foot upon her breast and face to the effusion of blood." The woman's husband "chased the reverend gentleman with a drawn sword, with which he succeeded in inflicting a slight wound in the back." Another episode of the combat was furnished by a woman armed with a "heuk" or sickle, who aimed a blow at the minister's throat, which he warded off with his gloved hand. His fingers were "cut to the bone." The glove was long preserved as a reminder of his escape, and the woman who aimed the blow afterwards committed suicide. By this time the ploughshares had been seized and thrown into the Dee, where they have long since rotted away. The M'Kie party now fled, the minister himself retiring ingloriously "with all his clothes cutt by the buttocks," and, if the veracious chroniclers be credited, showing wounds both in front and rear.\*

Although some of the foregoing particulars must be discounted, the Presbytery Records leave no doubt that this discreditable riot actually occurred on the date given. As early as December 15th, or on the Tuesday following the outrage, a "delation" or formal report was made to the Presbytery at

\* The above account of the Glebe Riot is derived from the *MS. Narrative*, and Nicholson's *History of Galloway*, and bears manifest marks of exaggeration and vulgar legend.



Kirkcudbright, that M'Kie "had been most inhumanly and barbarously treated, abused, wounded, and beaten, and had his Cloaths torn by a Rable of the irregular people in the parish upon Wednesday last, being the ninth of the current." \* This official report coincides generally with the *MS. Narrative*. The Presbytery directed a formal complaint to be lodged with the Lord Justice-Clerk and the "Queen's solicitor."

The Lord Justice-Clerk advised that the Judge Ordinary or Justices of the Peace should be furnished with "ane Information of the abuses committed" against M'Kie, and should then be required to put the rioters on the "Porteous Roll," so that they might be prosecuted at the next circuit court. The "Porteous" (otherwise *portuos*, *portour's*, or *portuis*) Roll is "ane catalogue containing the names of the persons indyted." † The name is perhaps derived from the French *porter*, to carry, the roll being carried up to the *aires* or circuit court. It lay with the local justices to furnish informations or charges to the Lord Justice-Clerk, who in turn drew up this list of persons accused and suitable indictments against them. The procedure, now aimed at, had just been settled by Act of Parliament, Queen Anne, cap. 16, sect. 3, 4. ‡ This Act worked with the proverbial inefficiency of new enactments. Although the offences were committed in December 1713, it was reported by M'Kie to the Presbytery in April 1715, that the "Stewart Deputē" had taken no steps to get the names inscribed on the Porteous Roll, and the Presbytery at once directed a strong remonstrance to be sent to that official, threatening to report him to the "Justiciary" for neglect of duty. Johnston of Anwoth was delegated to

\* See Presb. Rec., Dec. 15, 1713, *sessio secunda*, 7 p.m.

† Form of Process, lib. ix. c. 7.

‡ See Erskine's *Principles*, 1870, p. 629: *Bell's Dictionary of the Law of Scotland*, p. 749: *Hume on Crimes*, II., 128: *Jamieson's Dictionary*, voce Porteous. And compare *portuis*, the technical term for a priest's breviary.



attend the approaching May Circuit in Dumfries and lay a statement of the "disorders" before the Lords of Justiciary; but illness prevented him from fulfilling this duty. The Lord Advocate's advice was next sought, and in accordance with his suggestion, the statement referred to was forwarded to the Agent for the Church. Cameron was at a later stage directed to lay it before the Commission of Assembly. The chapter of accidents was completed by the Presbytery Clerk failing to supply Cameron with this paper, when he repaired to Edinburgh. It was sent after him, but reached him too late. The Commission had risen abruptly, owing to the "Confusions of the time." The Pretender's expedition had filled the Church with alarm, and the Presbytery, "considering the Extraordinary Confusion that the Nation is now in," were obliged meanwhile to let the matter drop.

A long interval succeeded, during which Macmillan laboured unmolested among his people. But on May 29, 1717, Monteith reported that the statement and complaint had at last been laid before the circuit judges.

M'Kie now made a complaint to the Presbytery, on October 1, 1717, that ever since his ordination, he had been kept out of church, manse, and glebe. He had been obliged to conduct service in the open air, but this exposed his hearers in winter to "wind and rain." He craved the Presbytery's intervention, so that the heritors might either get peaceable possession, or else build a "meeting-house for the worship of God." The Presbytery issued a letter, in consequence, requiring the heritors to take action as described, under pain of legal proceedings.\* The heritors ignored this peremptory command, although it was learned privately that "Balmaghie, Keltoun, Cassencary, and Duchray"

\* Presb. Rec., Oct. 1, 1717. At this meeting, James M'Millan, a son of the late minister of Balmaghie, and the Presbytery's "Bursar," was examined as a divinity student.

would concur in the execution of the Presbytery's will. That reverend body now resolved to take legal advice, but there is no record of the result, and in all likelihood, the friendly heritors took steps to shelter the small congregation to which M'Kie ministered. The *MS. Narrative* says, that "one heritor, with Mr. M'Kie and his party, concluded and builded a meeting-house, which some called the 'House of Rimmon,' and there they worshipped, and troubled the kirk no more." It is added, that M'Kie was lodged with his family (for he was now married) in a "certain gentleman's house which was enclosed into a park, being hard by the 'House of Rimmon;' and there he rested, never expecking the kirk or manse."

The site of the "House of Rimmon" cannot now be settled, but I have been told that it lay on the river-bank near the ferryman's cottage. In that case, M'Kie's temporary residence may have been at Livingstone, a house which answers to the vague description quoted above. As M'Kie had married (in a romantic fashion, after something like an elopement)\* a daughter of Nathaniel Gordon of Carleton, he was probably in easy circumstances. He was also a man of prudent and peaceable nature, shrinking from the violent scenes which had attended every attempt to gain his legal rights. From the year 1713, he does not seem to have repeated his endeavour to get possession of the glebe. The manse was still held by Macmillan, who married again some time before 1721, his choice falling upon a daughter of Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlston, the widow of Edward Goldie of Craigmue. As this lady had a number of children by her first marriage, Balmaghie manse was for a short time the home of a family. As to the church, it is said that a working agreement was made in 1714, that M'Kie should have it whenever Macmillan was away from home, as he now was very

\* See, for this curious episode, Presb. Rec., Nov. 16, 1714. Carleton is in Borgue.

frequently.\* Such was the state of matters from that date up to the middle of 1727, when Macmillan finally took his departure.

The immediate cause, which led to this event, was a decree of the Court of Session at length obtained by M'Kie against him for the rent of the glebe for 17 years, reckoned at 100 merks yearly. The news of this decision spread consternation among his adherents, a number of whom had already, however, begun to frequent M'Kie's ministry. Seventeen hundred merks or about £94 sterling, was a large sum in those days, yet the devoted band who had never deserted Macmillan hastened to offer to become responsible for the payment, if only he would remain among them. But his mind was made up, and he had more than this heavy liability to influence his decision. Both church and manse were now in a deplorable state of disrepair. The Presbyterial Visitation held immediately after he departed, disclosed the fact that there was only a single pane of glass left in the church, and that the manse and offices were nearly ruinous.† He was probably receiving no stipend now from any of the heritors. His first popularity was yielding to the wasting forces of time, and the gradual and growing reconciliation between the two parties in the parish. A new generation, too, was grown up since the stirring days of the "Grievances." Above all, a wide sphere of usefulness offered itself in Lanarkshire, where the Societies were chiefly located. His increasing labours among the "Remnant" made it desirable, also, that he should live in a less remote and inaccessible spot than Balmaghie.

All these reasons combined were enough to produce his removal, and accordingly M'Kie at last, in July, 1727, obtained possession of the glebe and ecclesiastical buildings, and found himself the sole minister in the parish. The conflict had lasted for nearly 24 weary years.

\* *MS. Narrative.*

† *See Presb. Rec., Sept. 13, 1727.*

While we must, of course, hold Macmillan guilty of resistance to the law in retaining church, manse, and glebe, we must take into account the state of things in the Church generally, and the unsettled political situation. It is an undoubted fact, that scores of Episcopalian ministers were left in possession of benefices, especially in the north of Scotland, simply because their parishioners would permit no other pastors to be settled among them. Why make fish of one and flesh of another? This was, in fact, Macmillan's own apology for his course of action. He acted not as a law-defying individual minister, but as one of the people of a whole parish, who even at the last begged him not to leave them. The people's call was emphatically his, and not M'Kie's; and in the Church of John Knox, it was easy to quote that Reformer's own conduct, in the Castle of St. Andrews, as a precedent for obeying such overwhelming summons to minister to a flock, who would receive no other shepherd. Macmillan, to the close of the Parish Schism, styled himself "Minister of the Gospel in Balmaghie," and exercised all the functions of parish minister. It is true that on Jean Gemble's tombstone he designates himself as "*alter*" minister in Balmaghie, and this has led some to imagine that, after 1710, he recognised M'Kie's claim to be regarded as minister *de jure*. That, however, is a mistake. A glance at the upper part of the stone shows that it bears also the names of the first John Macmillan and his wife, and hence the epithet *alter*, to prevent confusion between two successive ministers having the same name. The epitaph to his second wife contains no such distinctive term, because it is carved upon a separate stone. Here, we read simply "Minister of the Gospel in Balm'Ghie." Macmillan's whole contention was, as we have repeatedly noticed, that he and such as he, were the true parish ministers of Scotland, and we cannot believe that he ever owned M'Kie's title to that honoured name. He went

in and out ignoring his presence, as M'Kie in turn ignored Macmillan's ministrations, even re-baptizing a child christened by the "deposed man," if the well-known story of the "Twice-Christened Bairn" be true.\*

Again, the unsettled state of the country tended to weaken men's sense of legal obligation, especially in rude country districts like Galloway. The alarm of a French invasion in 1708, and the Pretender's adventure in 1715, kept the people in a state of uneasiness. We have seen how all attempts failed to bring to book William Murdoch and others implicated in the Glebe Riot, and how this was directly due to the political events of 1715. The Macmillanites, like Hepburn's party, were regarded as Jacobites by many, and in Hepburn's case, the suspicion of what was roughly classed as *Whiggery*, seems to have had some just basis of fact. The Government of the day, however, could not afford to go to extremities against large associations of men, having arms and some degree of military training. And thus it became possible for a determined and fearless minister, like our subject, to hold his own against every power of Church and State. In doing so, he must not be hastily condemned as simply disloyal or lawless, since he was, in a passive sense, connived at by the civil authorities, who were wise enough to see that, at such a crisis, it was best to leave him alone.

Macmillan left Balmaghie, doubtless, with a sore heart. For to its little manse he had brought three times† a happy bride, and one darling boy had been born there. Twice the angel of death had entered it, and taken away his beloved partner. And in the kirkyard on the hill, lay many whom he had tended, as a faithful pastor, in life and death. It must have been a cruel

\* For epitaphs referred to, also a reprint of the amusing tale of the "Twice-Christened Bairn," see *Kirk above Dee Water*, pp. 32, 77-80.

† He married a third time in 1725, his second wife having died in 1723.

wrench to go at last from a spot where he had laid "dear dust," and had perhaps fondly hoped to lie himself when all was done.

There is no record of any parting demonstration. Sullen disappointment was in his people's hearts. They had fought and suffered for him, and now, when "Kirk and State had quite given over,"\* he left them. Whether owing to some such natural displeasure, or to the ordinary healing work of time, the Parish Schism quickly melted away after Macmillan's definitive exit from the scene. In 1794, after sixty-seven years, the then parish minister reported that there were 862 souls in Balmaghie. Of these, 838 were attached to the Established Church. And of "Cameronians," there were only 8!

\* *MS. Narrative.*

## CHAPTER XI.

1707-1743.

### THE CAMERONIAN APOSTLE.

Macmillan's first public duty as pastor—Dispute over his marriage with Jean Gemble—Also, over baptism and relations with Balmaghie elders—The “Auchensaugh Renovation.”—He “debars” the Queen and Parliament—The “Auchensaugh Work” made the terms of communion—Disputes over the “Representation” to George I.—Military preparations in 1715—Day of Humiliation at Auchensaugh—Dispute over Macmillan's marriage with Mistress Mary Gordon—He offers to resign—Movement to secure colleagues—Macmillan goes to Carnwath—And to Braehead, Dalserf—His children born of third marriage—Negotiations with Ebenezer Erskine—Accession of Nairn—Reformed Presbytery set up—First licentiates—Macmillan's work as sole pastor during 36 years.

OUR last chapter brought the story up to the year 1727, so far as the parish was involved. We must now trace Macmillan's career as it was involved on the other hand with the organisation of which he was, to some extent, the head and agent.

One of his first duties of a public nature was to prepare the protestation against the union of the two kingdoms, which had been consummated on May 1, 1707. This document was drawn up by a committee, including the ablest men of the General Meeting ; but from internal marks of style and thought I am inclined to think that the draught of it, at least, was the work of Macmillan. The reader will find it reprinted in Dr.

Kerr's *Covenants and Covenanters*.\* In the minute recording the appointment of the committee, there occurs for the first time the name of John Macneil, who, according to Mr. J. H. Thomson, was a "probationer licensed by the Presbytery of Penpont, May 10, 1669."† Although a far older man than Macmillan, he now became something like his assistant in all offices competent for an unordained minister.

In 1708 Macmillan's first marriage gave serious distress to the "Remnant," not because they favoured clerical celibacy, but because he had been married by a minister of the State Church, John Reid of Carsphairn. Several members were actually "suspended" for "Accession jointly in the late emergent with Mr. John Macmillan (in his marriage)," but they were shortly after restored to membership on making an apology. The question of their minister's relations with the elders of Balmaghie, and with the people of that parish generally, caused prolonged debate. Was it right for him to hold communion with Established Church elders, or to marry and baptize Established Church people? In strictness, all this was a grave "defection," but the General Meeting valued their "reverend pastor" too highly to make any decisive pronouncement. The conclusion arrived at, after nearly two years, was that the meeting generally were satisfied with his "freedom in doctrine anent the sins of the land;" that his relations with the elders of Balmaghie were not carried further than as concerned the collection and care of the poor's money, and therefore might be condoned; and that, as regarded baptism, they accepted his promise not to grant it in future, unless after due engagements from the parents to avoid "what has been this meeting's grievance." The point thus darkly hinted at was the "payment of public taxations." ‡

\* p. 419.

† *R. P. Mag.*, 1870, p. 130.

‡ See *Conclusions*, April 7, 1712, comp. with May 8, 1710.



An undertaking which had been projected ever since the Societies obtained an ordained minister, was at last carried into execution in 1712. This was the famous "Renovation" or renewal of the Covenants at Auchensaugh.\* As it not only formed the culminating point in Macmillan's career, but also became the foundation of the Reformed Presbyterian movement for upwards of a century, a detailed account of this remarkable event must now be given.

The project of solemnly renewing the Covenant vows arose naturally out of the longing to have a celebration of the Lord's Supper, which grew more intense as soon as an ordained pastor was available. Since 1690, when all their ministers left them, there had been no such celebration. From the end of 1706 Macmillan had regularly administered the sacrament of baptism; but the "sealing ordinance" was earnestly desired. It was impossible to think of a sacramental occasion of such solemnity and importance, without also conceiving the project of a fresh Covenant pledge, to be taken prior to the sacred rite. Such had always been the custom of earnest followers of the "good old way." Monteith of Borgue, as we saw, made a regular practice of renewing his own personal covenant with God before every Communion. In the purest covenanting days these "renovations" were frequent. The last great function of this kind had taken place in 1689 at Borland Hill, near Lesmahagow, with the three "Society" ministers—Lining, Shields, and Boyd—officiating. Now, after 23 years, the hearts of the faithful beat high in anticipation of another such demonstration.

The official narrative of the "Auchensaugh Renovation" was prepared by Macmillan and his coadjutors, and bears strong marks of his homely vigorous style. It is a pamphlet of 108

\* Hutchison (*History of R.P. Church*) spells it Auchinsaugh, but in the *Conclusions* it is Auchensaugh, and so also J. H. Thomson, *R.F. Mag.*, 1870, p. 133.

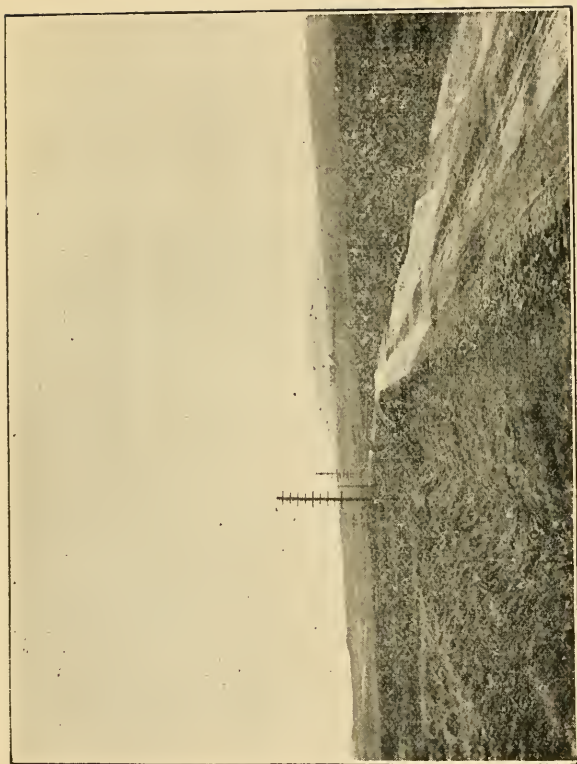
closely printed pages, and contains several characteristic documents. We have, first, a "Preface" giving a detailed report of the services and sermons; then, a reprint with needful marginal amendments of the National Covenant and of the Solemn League and Covenant; and lastly, a stupendous "Acknowledgment of Sins," covering 42 pages, along with a "Solemn Engagement to the Duties" contained in the Covenants, which fills the remaining 9 pages.\*

The previous preparations had been very careful and deliberate. The final resolution to proceed with the "work" was reached only on May 26, 1712, and a committee met on July 3 to arrange for providing the Communion elements, tokens, and utensils, and to estimate the probable number of the communicants. The place fixed upon was "the common betwixt Douglas and Crawfordjohn," a convenient centre for the scattered "correspondences." The time of meeting was to be Thursday, 24th July, but there was to be a "humiliation day" on the previous Wednesday.† The Committee, on meeting at Crawfordjohn, found that there would not be enough elders to serve the communicants, and recommended seven members of the General Meeting to Macmillan, "with all humility," for ordination to that office. A warlike note was struck by a direction of the committee, that "all have their arms in readiness," and if there be "any just grounds of fear," expresses were to be sent to all the Societies, requiring them to bring their weapons with them. Failing such special order, however, none were to come armed. A final effort to induce the Hepburnians to agree to terms of communion, and to join in the demonstration, had completely failed.‡

\* See *Conclusions*, May 26, 1712.

† The paging is peculiar, the Preface being numbered 1-40; then the Covenants, Acknowledgment, etc., 1-64; but by a printer's error, pp. 61-64 are repeated. See the pamphlet in New College Library, Edinburgh.

‡ *Conclusions*, July 3, 1712.



AUCHENSAUGH MOOR AND HILL.



Such were the private arrangements made by those responsible for the anxious duty of carrying through a great public demonstration, which it was at one time feared the Government or private opponents might attempt to prevent. Wodrow reflects the vulgar misapprehension of their objects when he writes, at the very date, "I do not know how far unknown unto many of them, and it may be to Mr. Macmillan, the Jacobites may have a hand in this."\* He adds, that it is feared the Government may "make a handle of this, to bring on matters yet more grievous to the Church." We have already pointed out, that the Cameronians were, by many, suspected of holding communications with St. Germain's, and Ker of Kersland afterwards roundly asserted that he had done so himself, while keeping in touch at the same time with the cabinet of Queen Anne and George I. The position of men who refused to take the Oath of Allegiance, to pay taxes, to seek or take the decisions of the law-courts, to serve in the militia, or in any way to own the existing Government in Church and State, was certainly open to dangerous misunderstanding. It would have been pardonable if the Government had taken steps to prohibit a large assembly of men in arms, who held such principles. They did not, however, share the fears of ecclesiastical politicians, and probably Macmillan received some private assurances of protection and immunity, since, as we saw, no weapons were taken to the field after all.

It was a perfectly peaceable and unarmed multitude, therefore, which, on Wednesday, July 23, 1712, listened in solemn silence while first Macmillan gave a short address vindicating and explaining their objects in the meeting, and then Macneil preached an elaborate sermon on Jeremiah L. 4, 5, shewing the duty and necessity of renewing the National Covenants. These

\* *Analecta*, ii. 75.

discourses were interspersed with psalms and prayers, and finally the Covenants and "Acknowledgment of Sins" were read, with a solemn prayer of confession following. Macmillan then dismissed the people for the day, not without a "reprehension" of their "unconcerned carriage and behaviour" during the reading of the "Acknowledgment of Sins." As this document must have taken at least two hours to read at a rapid rate, and as the previous exercises of prayer, praise, and preaching, cannot be estimated at less than other two, the reader of a modern age will hardly be able to refrain from sympathising with the restlessness of the audience. It was the height of summer, and a little impatience was unavoidable, especially as many present were mere onlookers and sightseers.

On Thursday, July 24, a multitude, variously estimated at from 1000 to 1700 persons,\* gathered on the desolate moor, and Macmillan plunged into an exhaustive discourse on "Right Covenanting," from Isaiah xlv. 5. This, his only extant sermon, shews all the qualities of the *True Narrative* and his other printed remains: plainness and vigour of style, fondness for everyday illustrations and references, a tendency to minute divisions and thorough searching of every topic, and a great command of Scripture. The peroration, even in a bald abstract, bears every appearance of effectiveness and a certain manly eloquence. "The keeping of this Covenant had been to our nation a Sampson's lock, whereby we should have been able to oppose all our enemies; whereas the breach of it hath opened a door for all sorts of enemies to creep in amongst us. And hence is verified that which the Lord has threatened his people with, for their breach of covenant: Deut. xxviii. 44,—that the enemy shall be the head, and his people the tail."

At the close of his sermon, the "Acknowledgment" was once

\* Wod. *Anal.*, ii. 75.

more read, "as preparative to the engaging part." Then, he offered a solemn prayer, confessing sins and begging assistance. Turning toward the people, he commanded those who wished to renew the Covenants to "stand upright and hold up their right hands." He recited the Oath article by article, pausing at each and holding up his hand, until the Covenanters raised their right hands. As is well known, this is the immemorial Scottish mode in taking oaths. When all was done, he delivered a closing exhortation to faithfulness, and dismissed the people in the usual form.

Wodrow's account of the Thursday's incidents has its usual gossip character. He speaks of "Mr. Macmillan's clerk" as reading the "Acknowledgment," and adds that Macmillan stopped the reading "when the paper came to Test and Oaths," and said, "Are there none here that are guilty of any of these things? Let them acknowledge and confess them." Several persons rose and made confessions: one, that he had been at the Lesmahagow Renovation, and "would have confessed it there, but was stopped." Another spoke of his sin in "hearing the ministers." Macmillan gently asked him, if he was "convinced in his conscience that that was a sin; and desired none might confess anything but what they were convinced in their conscience was a sin." Confessions then multiplied; one man deploring a "rash oath," many acknowledging that they had never been married, though living as man and wife, and some confessing that "they were troubled with strange thoughts." These last Macmillan "checked, as confessing things that need not be confessed." It "took a long time," and must have been a very curious scene for the elegant ladies and gentlemen, who were said to be among the crowd. This public confession is mentioned in the official report, but purely as covering "public steps of defection," not private sins, a description fully borne out by Macmillan's "checking" those enthusiasts, who sought

to wash their spiritual dirty linen in public. Wodrow's chatty page gives a pleasant notion of Macmillan's kindly common-sense, and of the tolerant spirit which he cherished towards the State Church. It is much to be regretted, that he did not carry to the Communion Table the same reasonable and kindly spirit. But this is to anticipate.

The Friday was, as usual in the old sacramental feasts, a *dies non* ; but Saturday, July 26, found Macneil in the pulpit once more (if pulpit there was),\* but the official account gives no details of the sermon or service. Wodrow supplies the omission, stating that the reverend gentleman "began with an apology for being a preacher," *i.e.*, a probationer and unordained. The employment of a probationer to preach on the Saturday, which was the special day of preparation for the Holy Communion, was then very unusual. The story is told of Warner of Balmaclellan, that when a "preacher," he was suddenly called to assist at a "Communion Occasion," and delivered a discourse shorter than the usual custom was. The old minister of the parish, in his prayer, "acknowledged the Lord's goodness in carrying through the work, when his helpers failed him, and he had none but a young lad, and he geyan short-breathed (brief)!"† Macneil explained, that it was the lack of helpers which obliged him to appear again, and on that solemn day. There is something pathetic in such humility, when we remember that Macneil had been a "preacher" for 43 years. At the close, Macmillan distributed the tokens, and Wodrow adds—"I hear some were refused them, unless they would promise not to hear the Established ministers; but I know Macmillan did give tokens to some who, he knew, were not ordinary hearers, and that without any such engagement." Here is another unsolicited testimony

\* Most probably, a preaching-tent was used.

† See *Fasti*, under Balmaclellan.



to Macmillan's tolerance. The tokens were probably made for the occasion, and resembled those used at the next "Renovation," in 1745. Of these 1745 tokens, Mr. Hutchison says that "many are still in existence. They bear on the one side the date '1745,' and on the other the letters 'G.M.,' which to many people are enigmatical, but doubtless stand for 'General Meeting.'"\* The usual custom was to stamp on one side the initials of the parish, and on the other the date beneath the initials of the incumbent.† If this was followed at Auchensauigh, the initials would be J.M. But I have heard of no existing specimen.

The "great day of the feast" was Sunday, July 27, when, of course, the entire "work" was done by Macmillan himself. He has modestly refrained from giving us his sermon, which, according to Wodrow, was on I. Cor. v. 7—"Christ, our pass-over, is sacrificed for us." The same chronicler tells us that "there were eight tables, about sixty at a table, and they were double tables. They reckon about a thousand communicants." Macmillan "communicated himself at the first table." He served the whole eight tables, giving all the addresses himself, and "preached at night." Wodrow notes also that "it was a very extraordinary rain the whole time of the action."

The most remarkable incident of the whole series of services took place this day, when, in "fencing the tables," Macmillan said, according to his own account, "I debar and excommunicate from this Holy Table of the Lord, all devisers, commanders, users, or approvers, of any religious worship not instituted by God in His Word, and all tolerators and countenancers thereof. And by consequence, I debar and excommunicate, from this Holy Table of the Lord, Queen and Parliament, and all under them who spread and propagate a

\* *Hist.*, p. 190.

† Burns's *Scottish Communion Plate*, p. 464.

false and superstitious worship, ay, and while they repent.  
. . . I excommunicate and debar all who are opposers of our Covenants and Covenanted Reformation, and all that have taken oaths contrary to our Covenants, and such particularly as are takers of the Oath of Abjuration, whether ministers or others, until they repent.”\*

This extraordinary utterance spread like wildfire through the country, and Wodrow records the fact that Macmillan “debarred the Queen and Parliament,” as his first piece of news regarding the Auchensaugh Sunday. Macmillan attempts to justify his action by explaining that the above tremendous formula is simply a transcript and application of the Second Commandment, as explained in the Larger Catechism of the Westminster divines. There, all toleration of superstitious worship is said to be forbidden by the commandment against idolatry. Yet that very year, a Toleration Act had been passed, allowing Episcopal services in Scotland, provided the clergymen took the Abjuration Oath. That Oath itself had been imposed on the Established Church clergy in 1711, and involved a sworn promise to maintain on the throne a sovereign, who must be a member of the Church of England, and in Macmillan’s view, an idolator. His own former co-presbyters in Kirkcudbrightshire had mostly taken this Oath, but there was much division of opinion regarding it.

Even with these explanations, the reader may naturally be disposed to condemn Macmillan’s high language about dignities. It must, however, be remembered, that he spoke in the excitement of a long series of meetings, and on an occasion when covenanting precedents would be followed, even where a cooler judgment might consider them out of date. Had not Cargill excommunicated the second Charles? And was not Macmillan, in a sense, Cargill’s apostolic successor?

\* *Official Report*, pp. 38, 39.

After all is said, the best apology for an unwise and rash utterance like this, lies in the fact that it was a *brutum fulmen*, a sentence which could not be carried out, an excommunication which excluded its subjects from nothing that they were ever likely to desire. There is, after all, something in Hill Burton's suggestion that Macmillan that day was carried out of himself, what in French is called *exalté*. Mr. Hutchison comments severely on the reference made by the historian to the "days of glory at Auchensaugh."\* But I suspect that Hill Burton is not far from the truth. Auchensaugh was Macmillan's brightest and happiest day in a long life. He saw himself surrounded by a gathering of the old covenanting type, such as he had known in boyhood. He felt that he filled no mean office in ministering the Holy Supper, alone, to so great a number of devoted adherents of the "good old way." A certain exaggeration, and uplifting of soul, were natural and pardonable results. We can but pass over the regrettable touch of intolerance, and fix our gaze rather on those traits of strong sense and manliness and kindness of heart, which even the prejudiced author of the *Analecta* could not feel justified in suppressing.

It only remains to add, that the whole "occasion" concluded on Monday, July 28, with a sermon from Macmillan. Thus in five days he had delivered three discourses, and "served" eight tables, besides giving frequent prayers and addresses, an amount of toil that proved his bodily and mental vigour. On July 29 a business meeting was held at Crawfordjohn, the accounts were settled, the Covenants were ordered to be circulated in a "fair copy upon parchment," for signature by "all the men who had sworn them at Auchensaugh," and an official print of the whole proceedings was directed to be forthwith published. August 17 was appointed as a Thanksgiving Day for the Communion.

\* Hill Burton, *History*, V., 239-242; Hutchison, *History R.P. Church*, p. 167.

On November 3 the Covenants, as renewed at Auchensaugh, were made the terms of communion, and continued to be so up to the year 1820. Women, however, were not required to sign the Covenants, a verbal consent being deemed to be sufficient.\*

The high-water mark of Auchensaugh was soon left behind. Divisions crept in among the Remnant, first in connection with a preacher named Adamson,† and then more bitterly over the unfortunate "Representation of Grievances" to the new King ‡ A startling proposal was now first mooted, that Macmillan should be asked to ordain "some to the office of the ministry." There were several "students," as we know, in the membership, such as Umpherston and Smith. And Macneil had been a preacher for well-nigh half a century. It was a natural, although daring thought. Why not lay hands on men so highly qualified, and so secure the "succession of a gospel ministry?"

When this extraordinary scheme was debated, it was found that much difference of opinion existed. The events of 1715, also, served to hinder further procedure at this time. The Societies were arming and "rendezvousing," and learning "manual exercise."§ At this time there was much bustle in all the Nonconformist camps. The Episcopalians were on the alert in the interests of the Pretender. Hepburn was preparing to march to Dumfries, and meantime he armed and drilled his men near the manse of Urr. All over Clydesdale and Nithsdale, and in the Lothians, Fife, and Stirling, small bodies of the Cameronians met secretly for drill and accoutrement. It was a time of uneasiness, and no one knew how soon there might be a change of King and a change of constitution.

The Pretender disappointed all the vague hopes cherished

\* *Conclusions*, Nov. 3, 1712 ; March 2, 1713.

† *Conclusions*, Oct. 26, 1713.

‡ *Conclusions*, Sept. 8, 1714, and following minutes.

§ *Conclusions*, May 1, 1714 ; Aug. 15, Oct. 5, 1715.

regarding his career. Matters returned to their normal state, and the wrangling over the ill-starred missive, addressed to George I., broke out afresh. At length recourse was had to the ultimate expedient of a Solemn Humiliation. The brethren's hearts turned to that Cameronian Sinai, Auchensaugh Hill, and there they spent the 24th July, 1718, in bemoaning their own and the land's sins.\* In this effort to restore harmony, Macmillan took the leading part, and ultimately the threatened schism seems to have been averted.†

Once more Macmillan greatly distressed his scrupulous friends by a matrimonial alliance. His first wife, Jean Gemble, had died in 1711, and in 1719 he married Mary or May Gordon, widow of Edward Goldie of Craigmuir, and a daughter of Sir Alexander Gordon, Bart., of Earlston in Dalry. He had been brought into intimate relations with "Earlston" some years before, when the latter came into conflict with the Kirk Session of Dalry and the Presbytery. Earlston had been accused of a grave moral offence, and had made a public vindication of his character in Balmaghie Church one Sunday in February, 1711.‡ Probably he and Macmillan were old acquaintances, since the latter is said to have been descended from the family of Arndarroch on Earlston estate. Earlston, also, had married a sister of Sir Robert Hamilton of Preston, the active agent and friend of the United Societies, who is credited with first using the name of Reformed Presbyterian.§ The intimacy between the deposed minister of Balmaghie and Earlston brought the former into acquaintance with his second daughter, who in 1711 had just been left a widow with four young children. Their

\* *Conclusions*, May 6, July 25, 1718.

† At the "full-dress" debate on the "Representation of Grievances" to George I., 26 voted against it, and 22 for approving it. See *Conclusions*, May 9, 1715, with Howie's note.

‡ *Presb. Rec.*, Feb. 20, 1711.

§ *Hutchison's Hist.*, p. 138.

friendship ripened into a devoted attachment, and in 1719 they were married by Gilchrist of Dunscore, a nonconforming minister recently deposed by the Presbytery of Dumfries.\*

The new alliance was well fitted to strengthen Macmillan's position in many ways. His wife was one of a pure covenanting stock. Her father, who became baronet in 1718, was the so-called "Bull of Earlstoun," whose romantic adventures Mr. S. R. Crockett has transferred to the pages of the *Men of the Moss-hags*. Her mother was, as already stated, a sister of Sir Robert Hamilton. Better still, she proved a woman of singular piety, and thoroughly in sympathy with her husband's work and position. The reader is desired to refer, for proof of this, to the "Elegy," reprinted in our appendix. Socially and financially, the match was extremely advantageous to Macmillan. His wife's father had just succeeded to the title and estates. Craigmuir was the property of a minor, and probably life-rented by the widow. The marriage, however, was one of affection and perfect religious sympathy.†

In spite of these considerations, or perhaps because of some of them, the General Meeting deemed it necessary to send a deputation to "converse with" Macmillan on the "emergent of his late marriage." They were to meet with him at "Hartbush in Tinwald," and at same time to confer with Gilchrist on the points of difference. This was on May 4, 1719. On August 3 Macmillan attended the meeting, and offered to submit his marriage and all other "controverted things since the late work at Auchensauth" to a "lawful competent Judicatory." As the meeting hesitated, he at once offered, further, to surrender his call, and then, in much agitation, the assembled delegates declared that "they neither could not nor would not receive that

\* *Conclusions*, Feb. 5, 1718.

† See M'Kerlie's *Lands and their Owners in Galloway*, III. 86; 419-422.

call at his hand, but did humbly desire him to retain it as formerly." This practically ended the affair, although William Wilson two years later assigned this marriage as a "step of defection," aggravated by the fact, as he put it, that Macmillan "threw down the call, offering to leave them, as he had done oftentimes before."\*

The relations between Macmillan and his friends of the Societies resembled those between a fond but exacting couple in wedlock. The strict and unbending Covenanters had grown to love and revere their chosen pastor, and yet they incessantly found fault with him for his relations with the Established Church, slender and fading as these had become. They were proud of him, and fond of him, but they could not resist the temptation to criticise him. His intimate personal association with the elders and many of the people of Balmaghie, his constant practice of baptizing the children there, and his twice-repeated offence of seeking the marriage-rite from Established Church ministers, were things "very grievous and lamentable" to men who preferred to starve in spiritual matters rather than to give or take help from the State clergy, or from ministers, such as Hepburn and Gilchrist, who just fell short by a hair's breadth of the full covenanting "testimony."

The records of the General Meeting now shew an active resumption of the movement to induce Macmillan to ordain a colleague or colleagues. This movement was quickened by Macmillan's own action in declining to celebrate the Lord's Supper because of "his own frailty" and the want of help. They were at length unanimous in judging that the "extraordinary case" justified an extraordinary step. Ordination, according to Presbyterian form, is the act of a Presbytery, and one minister cannot, therefore, confer it alone. Yet, so urgent

\* See MS. in New College Library, Edinburgh, already referred to.



did the crisis appear, that a formal call was put into Macmillan's hands, in favour of Macneil and two students of divinity, Alexander Marshall and Hugh Clark.\* In spite of this clear deliverance, the proposal remained in abeyance, although revived at intervals. Macmillan wisely shrank from a step so unusual, and fitted to give rise to hostile comment. And a different plan, offering at least a partial solution of the difficulties, soon began to be agitated.

Macmillan, as we know, still lived in Balmaghie Manse, but there is reason to believe that his field of labour was now largely situated beyond Galloway. There are complaints of friends in Galloway not attending meetings or sending contributions.† It was frequently impossible for Macmillan, now an elderly man with declining health, to attend meetings, or to discharge his pastoral duties among the scattered "correspondences," lying chiefly in Lanarkshire and its neighbouring districts. The question at length came to be, whether he should remain in Balmaghie, where his work was decreasing, or come forth definitely and live among his friends of the Societies. This latter course would make his services more readily available, and it was accordingly, on May 8th, 1727, "overtured before the General Meeting, that Mr. John Macmillan should leave Balmaghie."

Wodrow probably reflects, correctly enough, the state of affairs in Balmaghie at this time. He says, writing in 1725, "I hear the Macmillanites are very much broken and crumbled among themselves." He notes also that Hepburn's death had dissolved his party, most of whom had rejoined the Church. The followers of Taylor were "very much sinking." The high covenanting position was evidently losing popularity in Galloway,

\* *Conclusions*, Feb. 15, May 8, July 10, Oct. 16, 1721.

† *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1723.



and it had against it all the most powerful forces, both clerical and territorial.

In the same passage, Wodrow hints at some unpopularity caused by Macmillan's third marriage. Mrs. Mary Gordon had died in 1723, and in 1725 Macmillan, returning from one of his frequent expeditions, brought with him a third wife, whose name, even, remains in doubt. According to one family tradition, it was Grace Russell; according to a second, it was Janet Jackson. A deputation waited on him to inquire as to the facts of the ceremony, but no information was vouchsafed them. Rumour had it, that he had been married by Fork of Killallan, with whom the Societies at one time negotiated without result. The whole affair, says the garrulous author of the *Analecta*, "caused a great gumm among his followers." The Church "was very throng for some Sabbaths after his marriage, but is since turning much thinner."\* With this parting piece of gossip, Wodrow dismisses Macmillan from his pages.

Taking everything into account, we may assume that Macmillan had good reasons for leaving a post, which he had held so long against every attack. The reader is referred to the previous chapter for a more extended account of these.

Before, however, he finally turned his back on the humble kirk and manse, he experienced for the first time the joy of fatherhood. From the flyleaf of his Family Bible, we find that "*Josias was born the 12th of June, 1726, upon a Sabbath morning about Six a'Clock . . . in ye manse of Balmaghie.*" He was "*baptized on ye Lord's Day afternoon, in ye presence of ye Congregation, (his) mother presenting.*" Kathren or Katharine, the next child, was born in Eastshields, parish of Carnwath, on December, 19, 1727, "*upon a Tuesday about one a'Clock in ye afternoon.*" He must therefore have left Balmaghie at some

\* *Analecta*, III., 243-4. *Gumm* means umbrage or displeasure.

date between June, 1726, and December, 1727. But the record already quoted shews that at May 8, 1727, he was still there, and the date of his departure is thus confined between May and December 1727. Probably\* he finally took leave of the parish at Whitsunday.

Although he thus threw himself unreservedly upon the support of the Societies, it was not till February, 17, 1729, that they resolved to collect funds for the "wadsett or feu of a piece of ground, to build a house upon, and provide conveniences for their reverend minister."† Meantime he occupied successively three different houses in the parish of Carnwath—Eastshields, where "Kathren" was born, Eastforth, the birthplace of John, afterwards an eminent Reformed Presbyterian minister, and Henshelwood, which witnessed the birth of Grizel. At Henshelwood he continued until the house was built. This was not accomplished without delay and difficulty. A sum of 1000 merks, or about £50 sterling was aimed at, and the contributions came in slowly.‡ At length the humble residence was completed, and at Whitsunday or earlier in 1734, Macmillan took possession. His last child, Alexander Jonita, a girl, was born at Braehead of Dalserf, as the house was named, on 28th May, 1734.

"When man builds a house, then Death steps in." So says the Eastern proverb, and on October 29, five months after, the little maid died, and was laid to rest in Dalserf Churchyard, "*beside Mr. Francis Aird.*"§

The Meeting now frequently assembled at Braehead. They were launched upon a fresh attempt to secure ministers, and were holding conferences with Ebenezer Erskine and his friends of

\* M'Kie was in possession in July, 1727.

† *Conclusions*, Feb. 17, 1729.

‡ *Ibid.*, Aug. 11, Oct., 1729.

§ See *Kirk Above Dee Water*, p. 65. Macneil also died in 1734.

the Associate Presbytery. In 1737, however, these well-meant negotiations also failed, the "Testimony" of Erskine not "answering our case." Immediately, Macmillan was urged to "call forth to the office of the Holy Ministry Mr. Charles Umpherston and Mr. Alexander Marshall."\* No further action is recorded, but it was not long before these protracted efforts to secure a colleague were crowned with success.

Thomas Nairn had been ordained minister of Abbotshall in 1710, but in 1737 he followed Erskine and became a member of the Associate Presbytery. He was called to labour at Linktown, and continued there until differences arose between him and the Associate Presbytery in December, 1742. Failing to obtain satisfaction, he "declined" their authority, and at once entered into communication with the United Societies. No time was lost in giving him a call to be Macmillan's coadjutor. The question of forming a regular Presbytery was delayed till next meeting; on the last Monday of May. This was on April 4, 1743, and from that date, according to Mr. Hutchison, the minutes are few and far between.† The Presbytery was ultimately "erected" at Braehead, on August 1, 1743, according to Nairn's own testimony, in a sermon preached at the ordination of Alexander Marshall on November 15, 1744.

The succession of the ministry was thus secured, since regular license and ordination could now be given. Macmillan's long pastorate of more than 36 years, as the sole ordained minister, came to an end. During this period he had led a truly apostolic life, traversing wide rural districts in Lanarkshire, the Lothians, Fife, Stirling, Nithsdale, and Galloway, on his pastoral rounds. He had preached in barns, in kitchens, in the open air—everywhere but in a church. For church, as yet, they had none. He had married and baptized, as occasion arose. He had tended

\* *Conclusions*, May 30, 1737.

† *History*, p. 190.

the sick and relieved the poor. The one thing he had not been able to do was to celebrate the Lord's Supper among these scattered congregations. At home in Balmaghie he still held that sacred feast, probably once in two years, the usual custom at the time. His celebrations were so solemn, searching, and impressive, that the very Communion Cup used by him became an object of superstitious awe. In the infrequency of his Communion he did not stand alone, since Hepburn, too, is said to have never once administered this Sacrament, or even received it, from 1688 to his death.\* But in every other part of an itinerant ministry, Macmillan had spent his strength ungrudgingly, and for no earthly reward. The Society's minutes indeed contain no definite record, that he received any regular stipend at all from his numerous flocks, although Wodrow states that a salary of 1000 merks a year was agreed on at Auchensaugh.† If this was so it was never minuted, and probably it was irregularly paid. As we have seen, no residence was provided until he had been travelling between Balmaghie and Crawfordjohn for 27 years. On the whole, we must regard these toilsome years as affording no mean testimony to his mental and bodily vigour, his spirit of self-denial, and his devotion to the covenanting cause. To minister among Cameronians has always been reckoned a laborious if honourable office. Long sermons, long miles to walk, and limited stipends, are the traditional associations of the pure times of the Reformed Presbytery. Macmillan lived and laboured in the very making of that body. He knew, therefore, what it was to traverse great distances by mere bridle paths, to sit by the shepherd's fire on a lonely hillside, to raise the simple psalm amid echoing hills. He knew the rough fare of farm-houses, and the perils of moss and fell. That he fulfilled his sacred office alone for 36 years,

\* Wodrow, *Anal.*, II., 378.

† *Ibid.*, II., 88.

without rebuke or default, and in such wise as to earn not only reverence but love from his hard-headed and undemonstrative people, surely entitles him to receive, without challenge, the name of the "Cameronian Apostle."

## CHAPTER XII.

1743-1753.

### THE LAST STORM.

First regular charge under the Reformed Presbytery—Dispute over Fraser of Brea—Fraser's doctrine of justification—Macmillan's position—A vote taken—Disruption of Presbytery—Macmillan's last days—His dying testimony—His favourite "promises"—And texts—"Yea, mine own God is He!"—Last moments—Appearance after death—His children—And descendants—Monument in Dalserf Churchyard—Mural brass in Balmaghie Church—Graves of Jean Gemble and Mistress Mary Gordon—Poetic tributes to the latter.

THE history of the "Reformed Presbytery," as its founders called it, is so far connected with our subject, that we must follow it for its first few years of infancy. Mr. Hutchison's valuable work may be consulted by those who desire further particulars.

Macmillan had now attained his "imaginary tribunal" in the shape of a "free, faithful, lawfully constituted judicatory." Henceforward a veritable Presbytery met at Braehead, although, for a few years, the force of habit and the need of winding up old affairs convened the General Meeting as formerly. The latest minute is in August, 1759, when a desire was expressed for a "renovation" of the Covenants. The minutes of the new Presbytery, between 1743 and 1758, are unfortunately lost; but it is known that there was a "renovation" in 1745 under its auspices. By this time a third minister had been added, the Presbytery having laid its hands in ordination on Alexander

Marshall, who had long been favourably regarded by the Societies. Marshall was the first licentiate of the Reformed Presbytery. The venerable hand of Macmillan was laid on his head. It had performed no such Presbyterian function since the year 1702, when Gordon of Crossmichael was ordained. He took part in four subsequent ordinations. John Cuthbertson was ordained in 1747; James Hall in 1750; John Macmillan, his own surviving son, in 1750; and Hugh Innes in 1751.\*

Macmillan did not live to see the formation of regular charges, the first of which, having a meeting-house, was at Sandhills, near Shettleston, a suburb of Glasgow. This, the oldest Reformed Presbyterian Church, had most appropriately his own son for its minister.† But this was not till 1781, when the venerable pastor had been many years in the grave.

As Macmillan's ministry began in strong controversies, so it ended amid a violent dissension regarding doctrinal points. The dogma in dispute was one which has always afforded scope for division, the atonement made by our Lord. The discordant voice came from the grave. The Rev. James Fraser of Brea, while a prisoner on the Bass Rock, had written a "Treatise on Justifying Faith." He died in 1698, and it was not till 1749 that the work was published. Its editor, a minister of the Associate Presbytery, was at once deposed. Macmillan's attention was drawn to the book, and the Reformed Presbytery, shortly after its publication, formulated four propositions in opposition to its teaching. Briefly stated, Fraser's teaching affected chiefly the extent of the atonement. He divided justification by faith into four different stages or classes:—(1) *legal* or *fundamental* justification, by the death of Jesus, in which all mankind have a share; (2) *personal*, obtained by conscious

\* Hutchison's *Hist.*, p. 190: Binnie's *Sketch*, pp. 15, 16.

† Binnie's *Sketch*, p. 80-83.



union with Christ ; (3) *declarative*, or the justification granted to saints who have sinned, and (4) *final*, after the last judgment.\*

The crucial point arose in reference to the first of these classes, the so-called legal or fundamental justification. Fraser found in the New Testament the frequent statement, that "Christ died for all." He read Christ's own invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour." He knew that, over broad Scotland, the gospel-offer was made to all. Yet the ordinary view of the Confessional teaching regarding Election and Predestination was, that only a limited number were destined and chosen to benefit by Christ's atoning work. He himself honestly believed this, but he desired to find some logical reconciliation between the free gospel-offer and this limited salvation. He imagined that he had found it in the distinction between legal and personal justification. Christ died for all, and all therefore have a legal right to the benefits of his death. But all will not be saved, because God has, in his mysterious wisdom, appointed that many shall never claim their legal rights. Many are, as he phrases it, "reprobates," and die without further interest in Christ. They are not personally justified, but only forensically and technically.

Fraser's illustrations make his meaning clearer. Two may be given, to throw light on his reasoning. The world of mankind is compared to a casket of jewels. Christ bought the world as one might buy such a casket ; but He bought it only for the sake of the chosen few, as one might buy a whole casket for the sake of some special jewels inclosed within it, retaining these, and casting the rest away. Again, "reprobates" are compared to men in prison, with the door unlocked. Christ's death unlocked the door, but "reprobates" die in their dungeon, because they will not walk out at the door.†

\* See Fraser's *Meditations on Justification by faith*.

† Walker's *Theology and Theologians in Scotland*, ed. 1888, p. 82.

Dr. Walker, in the work quoted below, has pointed out the fatal weakness of Fraser's theory. It makes "the Father satisfied, and the Saviour the wrath-inflicter." It may be added, that it is Universalism without Salvation, a shadow without a substance. The system is indeed full of such contradictions. Taking only the illustrations quoted, how absurd to cast away anything so precious as a jewel ! How wasteful to buy a whole casket, for the sake of a small portion of its contents ! And how unreasonable to condemn the prisoner for not going out at the unlocked door, when you tie him hand and foot with the bonds of a doctrine of reprobation !

The Reformed Presbytery, in opposition to this theory, formally declared that "Christ represented and died upon the cross only in the room and stead of a select number of mankind." But James Hall, who had been licensed in 1750, espoused Fraser's views, and soon a serious agitation arose in the little Church Court. Macmillan, owing to age and frailty, could not attend all the consequent discussions, but he wrote to his brethren in terms of anxiety and distress, pleading for the old teaching.

At last, in April 7, 1753, the storm reached its height. A formal discussion took place at Brounhill, lasting all day, and till late on the following evening. An issue for a regular vote was adjusted as follows :—"Whether Mr. Fraser's maintaining that the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind, so that His satisfaction may be competent to be proposed to them in the Gospel, and pleaded by them for their justification ; and that this satisfaction is the ground and formal reason upon which this faith is founded—be a dangerous doctrine ? "

Of the seven clerical members, only four were present at this meeting. Nairn had unhappily left the Church under scandal. Cuthbertson was in America. Marshall, the proto-licentiate, was ill. The remaining members were the two Macmillans, father and son, who voted together in condemnation of Fraser's

teaching ; and Hall and Innes, who voted for it. Out of five elders, who also took part, three voted with the Macmillans, and two with the minority. Next day, April 9, the minority tried to have the decision rescinded, but failing in this, they declared it null and void, since two members had been absent and a fundamental Christian doctrine had been denied. They further claimed to be the "essential parts of the Presbytery," and talked of suspending and censuring the others. Finally, Innes, who was Moderator, abruptly closed the meeting, and along with his small following, left the place. They carried with them the Presbytery records, which were thus lost.\*

It may well be supposed that such exciting scenes did not tend to prolong the life of the aged Macmillan. He was no longer equal to these Presbyterial conflicts, as he had been when he first laid his "Grievances" on the table at Kirkcudbright, and faced his wrathful co-presbyters. Some dim thoughts we may conceive passing through his mind, as the end swiftly drew near, regarding the emptiness of all these refinements and theological wranglings, the beauty of peace and love among brethren. *Perturbatus egredior*, said the ancient heathen sage ; and Macmillan might have been pardoned if he had echoed the sad phrase. But the last days, now to be described, were not vexed beyond measure by painful reminiscences. And eternal peace settled at length on the worn brow.

The deathbed of Macmillan is associated with the Fraser of Brea controversy in a somewhat peculiar way, inasmuch as the contemporary account is an appendix to the *Observations on a Wolf in a Sheepskin* of Charles Umpherston. This curious little tract is now rare, but two perfect copies are in the New College

\* I have followed Hutchison's account, *History*, p. 198, 199. He fixes this discussion and division at Edinburgh ; but the *Wolf in a Sheepskin* locates it at Brounhill, pp. 10, 21.

Library, Edinburgh. The *Observations*, dated "November 15, N.S., 1753," or November 4, O.S., were completed just sixteen days before Macmillan died, and possibly Umpherston embodied in them the aged minister's own arguments. This paper is a critique of Messrs. Hall and Innes, who had recently circulated a statement of their case among the Societies. Incidentally, light is thrown on the strained relations between these two young clergymen and their spiritual father, Macmillan. The first discussion on Fraser of Brea's doctrines took place, it seems, at Brounhill, not at Braehead. Macmillan had apparently made a change of residence. Here, the aged pastor "tabled" Fraser's doctrines as unsound. At this conference, Umpherston accuses Hall and Innes of most disrespectful conduct. ". . . frequently, when that pious (I say not sinless) old Man did speak," they were observed "to turn their Faces, and make himself, and what he said, rather a matter of Buffoonry, than anything else; and, to my own Hearing, to express themselves in a most diminutive way, which I will not here mention."\* The young men, in point of fact, as the fashion of youthful presbyters too often is, considered Macmillan a fossil, and laughed irreverently at his antiquated views and phrases. They ridiculed his remarks on "Arminian texts," on a supposed "threefold Covenant," and on assurance of salvation. Such has been the mode of assertive youth in Presbyteries, up to our own day.

The controversy ended on April 9, as we have seen, in an act of petty larceny. Macmillan was fast drifting far beyond all such disputes. The criticisms of Umpherston were hardly ready for press, when it was seen that the end was very near. The particulars recorded cover the last week, beginning at a date "several days before his Exit," when his friends, from near and far, gathered round his bed. No names are given, but in

\* *Wolf in a Sheepskin*, p. 7.

addition to his surviving son John, now aged 24, and his surviving daughter Grizel, aged 22, he had beside him his faithful friend and apologist Umpherston, whose medical skill lent special value to his presence. Umpherston's trained eye noted the increasing weakness, with many other details which an ordinary observer would hardly have recorded so exactly. "His now crazy Body and failing Tabernacle could not supply him with Organs suitable to such a vigorous Soul, but was obliged after speaking some Time to rest a while." He was asked his opinion about a recent manifesto of the two seceders, and was able to express it in round terms. ". . . he was not only misrepresented, but notorious Falsehoods charged upon him, and had attempted to blacken his Character and Name, and sully his Reputation, now when he was going off the Stage." Plainly, the "Buffoonry" of the younger men had wounded him deeply; yet he added that "he heartily and freely forgave Mess. J. H-l, H. In-s, and A. W-t (J. Hall, H. Innes, and A. Wright) what they had done against him . . . and leaves his Testimony against Universal Satisfaction"—*i.e.*, against Fraser's doctrine of legal or forensic justification: as described above.

He was "now dying," says Umpherston, who professionally saw the signs which even a lay eye learns to notice. He was asked about his past life, and his attitude on Church questions. The brave old Covenanter never faltered. ". . . he was fully persuaded of the Equity of the Covenanted Cause, and the Work of Reformation carried on from 1638 to 1649. . . . He was fully convinced it was the Lord's Work and Cause, which he had many times signally manifested, by remarkable appearance for the same. And died in the firm Faith of it, that the Lord would yet own that Cause." Yet he "thought the Lord would first come in a Way of Judgment against the Nations, that even the Lord's own People need not expect to

escape a very sharp Trial for their Indifferency, and Lukewarmness, and sinful Compliancè with Enemies. He further added, that were he to begin his Life again, he durst not counteract what he had done, in bearing testimony for these Truths that had been sealed by the Blood of a noble cloud of Witnesses; but would judge it his Duty to act the same Part again, abstracting from his Weakness and Infirmities. . . .” We can see, here, how the old man’s mind wandered back to the early days at Balmaghie, when he passed through so many stormy experiences. “Much he spoke to this Purpose, two days before his Departure, though his Strength was much exhausted, and oft faintish through weakness of Body.”

On the last day of his life, Friday, November 30, N.S., he still continued to recall the past. In answer to a question, as to whether “death was terrible to him,” he declared his “longing desire” to be with the Lord, and “broke out into a Rapture . . . and spoke much of the Sweetness of Communion with the Lord, which, he said, his Soul had many times remarkably experienced, as in other Duties, so particularly in Meditation, and Prayer, to which he had been much accustomed, and that from his Infancy, the Lord having begun the Work of Grace very early in his Soul. And said, that when he was but very young he had essayed giving himself away by solemn Covenant unto the Lord. . . . And then went through much of the Tract of his Life, recounting the Way of the Lord’s Dealing with his Soul.” We share the regret which follows, since these last reminiscences are very full of value: “But pity, much has escaped the memory of those who were present.”

The dying man now repeated many of the “Promises which the Lord had many times made most refreshing and comfortable to him, through his wandering Life, in the midst of Dejection and Down-casting.” The devout reader will find it a pleasure to read some of these, as noted below.

*Fear thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.\**

*I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake.†*

*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.‡*

*My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.§*

In the midst of these pious ejaculations, great weakness seized him, and the thought of Family Worship entered his mind. It was night, and the ruling habit was strong in death. He named the psalm to be sung, and the Scripture lesson ; then begged “one to go about religious Worship.” The “one,” left unnamed, was doubtless his faithful friend and doctor, Umpherson. When the prayer ended, Macmillan, with a “smiling countenance,” said :—

“Now again the Lord has been sealing to my soul, by His Spirit, all those promises that I spoke of to you, has confirmed them to me, and assured me, that in a little I shall obtain the full possession of them, and receive a crown of righteousness from the righteous Lord.”

Some friends came in at these last moments. He “desired again they might go about Duty, and come close to the Bed-side, that he might hear, and so join with them ; for, said he, ‘I think I am fast going, and this will be the last time that I will join with you upon Earth, in serving the Lord.’ And so desired sing the first five verses of the 103rd Psalm ; for, said he, ‘my soul rejoiceth in the Lord God of my Salvation.’” The Scottish reader hardly needs to be reminded, that it is this Psalm, sung to the plaintive tune of *Coleshill*, which forms the *Nunc dimittis* of the communicants leaving the Holy Table.

\* Isaiah, xli. 10.

† Isaiah, xliii. 25.

‡ Psalm, lxxiii. 24.

§ 2 Cor., xii. 9.



Macmillan felt himself to be *in extremis*, and though none dreamed of giving him the Communion, he wished to depart rejoicing as one who had feasted, and was content.

Next, he ordered the tenth chapter of St. John to be read, and repeated the verses: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*"\* Then, as the prayer began, he begged "that they might all bless the Lord for his goodness, and pray that he might have a quick and speedy passage over the last Jordan into Immanuel's land: further said, 'O pray that the devil may be confounded, and prevented in his designs, for I know I shall yet have an attack from him!'"

Still, the aged Christian craved for Scripture song and word. At his request, a part of the 91st Psalm was sung, *Qui habitat*; and the first chapter of St. Peter's first epistle was read. It is that which concludes with the sad tale of the withering grass and falling flower, a theme fitting for those dark days of November; and then triumphantly contrasts this with the abiding Word of God.

At last the prayer was said, and then a fond memory came to him. Where was it written, *Yea, mine own God is He?* Some one said, it was in the metrical Psalm xlii., the very last line of it, and at his request the whole verse was read—

"For yet I know I shall Him praise,  
Who graciously to me  
The health is of my countenance,  
*Yea, mine own God is He.*"

"Yes, I know," murmured the departing pilgrim—"and am assured of it—*Yea, mine own God is He!*" "Then," says the good surgeon, "complained he had no feeling in the little finger of the left hand." Another friend engaged in prayer, and then

\* S. John, x. 27, 28.



“he said he thought he had no feeling in the left hand, so sensible was he of life departing from the Extremities of his Body.” It was now “past midnight.” The clock had struck, and the first day of December was begun. It was almost the anniversary of his first sermon as the minister of the United Societies, preached December 2, 1706, forty-seven years before. The coincidence seems to have struck the narrator, since he refers to the date at the beginning of his narrative.\*

“Upon which, it being said to him that, as he had ever been desirous of his Departure, and to be ever with the Lord, so it seemed to be evident, that the Time of his Departure was at Hand. Whereupon, he cheerfully replied, that he could welcome the King of Terrors, as a Messenger sent from his heavenly Father, to bring him to the Mansions of Glory; and added, ‘*Lord, I have waited for thy Salvation.*’

“Thus did his Soul continue to magnify the Lord to the last; and when his natural Strength failed, that he could scarce speak audibly, yet his Spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour.

“The last Words which he was heard to speak, within a few minutes of his last Breath, were, ‘*My Lord, my God, my Redeemer, yea mine own God is He.*’ And the few minutes remaining after he ceased speaking, he was observed to be in a praying and praising Disposition. And after he had fully finished his Course, with a pleasant Countenance, his Eyes lifted up, and his right Hand a little raised up to Heaven, he willingly resigned up his Soul to his beloved and faithful Saviour, in that full Faith and firm Persuasion, that with his Eyes he should see his Redeemer, and not another for him.”

“Thus comfortably,” adds the devout chronicler, “and joyfully, he resigned his Soul to God, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, on Saturday the 20th Day of November, O.S., 1753.”

\* *Wolf in a Sheepskin*, p. 39.



[illegible]

Such a death needs no comment. It speaks for itself. The man who could die thus was no mere "bigot separatist," or narrow sectarian. There was much in him of the patriarch, or even what Cunningham styles the high-priest. These incessant praises and readings and prayers bespoke one who had lived in the atmosphere of family prayers, and had been used to direct and appoint these daily devotions. And the right hand "a little raised up to heaven" (since the poor left hand was now dead) may seem to us a significant benediction on the sorrowing little Church. It must take us back, too, to the "high day" at Auchensaugh, where, as his right hand rose, a thousand others were lifted up to swear the solemn Covenant Oaths. What were the associations that made the words, *Yea, mine own God is He*, so dear, and drew them from his dying lips? We can but guess, and perhaps wrongly. But plainly enough there was an ancient sweetness in them for his soul. And perhaps they took him back to some summer day on the Minnigaff hills, when the field-preachers uttered their rough homely message, and men's hearts burned within them with a sacred, passionate fire.

The story ends here, or to continue the figure of our chapter headings, the voyage is finished in port. But some few particulars must still be given as to Macmillan's family and descendants. As we have seen, he was thrice married, but the two first unions were childless. The flyleaf of his Bible records the offspring of his third marriage, and touchingly sets down the death of three out of his five children. First, the infant daughter, quaintly named Alexander Jonita, died in 1734, aged 4 months. Then in 1738, died "Kathren," a "*stately and hopeful child; the day before she fell sick, that (as she expressed) ran frequently through her mind—'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory, etc.?' I could never have any doubt of her salvation.*" The child was only eleven. Two years passed, and in 1740 Josias, the eldest of all, was called away, "*being thirteen*

*years, seven months save 5 days. . . . He was a child beloved by all that knew him : he had a solid judgment and sharp memory. I could say much concerning my assurance of his salvation, but forbear ; not doubting the other two."* The infant, Jonita, lies in Dalserf Churchyard, with "Kathren" on her right and Josias on her left. Near them their aged father, too, reposes, his great monument contrasting with the tiny fragment built into the base, with its mutilated inscription—

HERE LYES THE CORPS  
OF KATHR . . .  
JANNET M'MILLAN  
DAUGHTERS OF THE  
REVERINT MR. JOH . .  
M'MILLAN, MINISTER  
OF THE GOSPEL  
. . . Jo . . .

The "other two," of whose salvation the kind old father doubted not, were John and Grizel. John, as we have recorded, was licensed and ordained by the new Presbytery in 1750, at the age of 21 ; and he lived till 1808. At his death, aged 79, he was minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Calton, Glasgow, with John Fairley as his colleague during the last years. He was twice married, and one daughter became the wife of Thomas Rowatt, minister of the Scaurbridge Cameronian Church. Penpont. The youngest son of this marriage became an ironmonger and farmer at Newton-Stewart, which he left for Edinburgh. He died in 1880. A son of his, Thomas Rowatt or Rouet, Esq., is in possession of his great-great-grandfather's seal, referred to in a former chapter.

The daughter Grizel married Andrew Galloway of Sandyhills near Glasgow, and had issue two sons, and one daughter Elizabeth, who married John Grieve, surgeon in Inverkeithing, whence he removed to Glasgow in 1794, and died there in

1820, aged 58. From him descended another great-great-grandson, John Grieve, Esq., M.D., Glasgow.

Grizel Macmillan became a widow in 1764, and married, again, John Thorburn, Reformed Presbyterian minister in Pentland. She died in 1767, aged 36, leaving an infant girl.

John Macmillan II. had a son, also named John, who was the first Professor of Divinity to the Reformed Presbyterian Church. He died in 1818, aged 68. The period covered by the ministry of the three John Macmillans extended from 1707 to 1818, or no less than about 112 years. The epitaphs on the Dalserf Monument, which was not erected till 1839, give these dates; and conclude by saying—"These preached the same Gospel, and ably advocated the same public cause, adorning it with their lives, and bequeathing to it their Testimony, and the memory of the Just."

It is a "far cry" from Dalserf to Balmaghie; yet in the little parish church of the latter, a fine memorial brass was erected in 1895, bearing the following inscription:—

"TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND IN MEMORY OF

JOHN MACMILLAN, A.M.,

Born at Barncauchlaw, Minnigaff, 1669:

Ordained minister of the Parish of Balmaghie 1701:

Accepted the Pastorate of the United Societies 1706:

Which office he laboriously discharged for 47 years:

Died at Broomhill, Bothwell, 1753. Buried in

Dalserf Churchyard.

A Covenanter of the Covenanters:

A Father of the Reformed Presbyterian Church:

A Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ."

"This Tablet is placed here by his Great-great-grandson,  
John Grieve, M.D., Glasgow, 1895."

The tablet is placed above the manse pew, and at the north end of the church. The preacher to-day, as he lifts up his eyes from prayer, sees from the pulpit the burnished surface. He can, with ordinary eyesight, read the name in large letters. So, through the coming years, this mute reparation is made to one whom the parish loved, but the Church rejected. Outside, in the churchyard, the spot can be shown where Macmillan's pulpit stood, for the east gable of the old church was partially preserved, for the sake of the fine monument to M'Kie, Macmillan's successor, which had been built against it. And near at hand lie Jean Gemble and Mistress May Gordon. To the latter, her husband wove a chaplet of verses :—

“ Here lies, beneath this humble monument,  
The precious dust of an exalted Saint :  
A Mary rightly nam'd, whose gracious heart  
Ev'n from her youth still chose the better part ;  
High Birth, Health, Honour, could not make her proud,  
But Grace and Vertue made her great and good ;  
For piety and prudence liv'd renown'd,  
And now is with immortal glory crown'd.”

A larger poetic tribute has been reprinted in our appendix. Both, like all Macmillan's printed work, are anonymous, but unquestionably from his hand.

Macmillan's own dust is in the churchyard of Dalsersf, where the imposing monument has lately been renewed by loving hands. There, also, rest three children, but their mother's grave is unknown.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### SUMMING UP.

Macmillan's character conditioned by nationality and country—His shepherd-life—His chief qualities—Determination—Conscientiousness—Self-Distrust—Shrewdness—Tolerance—Affectionateness—Poetical Spirit—Piety—Conclusion.

IT may not be tedious, to any reader who has accompanied me thus far in the story, to present some brief sketch of Macmillan's character as disclosed in the preceding pages.

Character cannot be fully understood without reference to country. Macmillan was a Scotsman of the purest strain. He was more than this, however; he was a thorough-bred "Galloway man." Any one, who will make the pleasant pilgrimage to Barncauchlaw, and from thence to the wilder scenery of Glenhead, Craigencallie, and the martyrs' graves at the Caldons, may easily gather something of the influences which moulded the boyhood and early life of Macmillan. Minnigaff and Kells and Carsphairn were assuredly "meet nurses" for such a man. The first-named parish, in particular, abounds in curious and even startling features. Even under our comparatively tame modern *régime*, with steam-rolled roads and the telegraph wires humming at the side, the drive from Newton-Stewart across the Cree to Murray's Monument, or away up to Glen Trool, furnishes scenery of wild and sometimes savage beauty.

The friendly guide points out deep, if not bottomless, peat-holes, where no animal heavier than the mountain-sheep dares to tread. The "devil's pasture," they call them. At one point

we draw up and test the eerie echoes which roll in from the hills. At another, a shaggy group of miners stand at the door of their rough shanty. For lead-mining has long been an industry, though hardly a very profitable one. Long snow-white ribbons of foaming water stretch down the sheer hill-sides, from which also huge masses of rock seem to threaten the wayfarer.

One has to blot out of the wild mountainous landscape every road, bridge, and fence, in order to conceive even faintly the aspect of the country as Macmillan saw it. In his time there were no wheeled carriages. At the beginning of the present century the chatty and learned author of the *Buchanites from First to Last*\* was the only person in the district around Castle Douglas who used a gig for his journeys. And even he did the bulk of his Inland Revenue work on foot.

I number still among my parishioners an aged dame whose girlhood was spent in the parish of Minnigaff. She remembers vividly the long narrow footpaths leading from her home to Minnigaff Church, and including such breakneck places as are indicated by names like the "cat-loup," the "fit-loup," and the "horse-loup," † Perhaps Macmillan himself knew these dangerous spots by the same descriptive names.

On the seemingly endless expanses of rolling hillsides Macmillan learned his first lessons as a pastor, by literally herding the rough sheep on his father's farm. Whatever is distinctive in a Scottish shepherd we may expect to find appearing, more or less, as an element of his character. And no one familiar with these Galloway wilds needs to be told that there is not on earth a being more solid, watchful, shrewd, and self-reliant than the "herd." Great responsibility is his, seeing that hundreds of pounds' worth of stock is confided to his care. In the anxious

\* Joseph Train, the friend and correspondent of Sir Walter Scott.

† *i.e.*, cat-leap, foot-leap, and horse-leap.

lambling time he hardly closes an eye in sleep, ranging at all hours of the day and night over pathless hills, in order to minister to his charge. His food is the homely "piece," carried in his pocket. His plaid forms both a mantle and a blanket. Beside him, ever on the watch, trots the almost human "collie," which is believed to do everything but speak. He strides along at a pace which no townbred limbs can equal, and though alone, he feels no depression or fear. In the seventeenth century his task was even harder, since there were no fences, and a careful watch must be kept up till harvest was over, lest the sheep should make a destructive "raid" on field or garden.

Such a life builds up a character very marked and impressive, even in a man who has had no special advantages from education or surroundings. If we assume that Macmillan lived this life till he was twenty-six, we can have little hesitation in tracing the main features of his character to these early associations.

The *determination*, for example, shewn by him in pursuing any course which he undertook, was a quality founded in the discipline of the moorland and sheepfold. Although signs of apparent vacillation occur, the reader cannot fail to note that his whole career ran on certain fixed lines. He would be a minister of the Gospel, but he was resolved to submit to no authority save Christ's own. Christ had a "kirk" in Scotland somewhere, which he sought with unwavering-stedfastness. He failed to find it in the Establishment; for that, according to his view, had early separated from Christ. He could not find it in the brief, though powerful movement of Hepburn; for Hepburn seemed in some degree to be serving two masters. At last he sought and found it among the "Suffering Remnant," with whom indeed his boyhood and youth were entwined, and among whom, in the prelatie days, his own father and mother had endured hardness. The various tackings and wanderings of his career were not the results of "weakness" or "disingenuity," as his

critic, Andrew Cameron, declared. They were nothing more than the successive efforts of a resolute voyager on the sea ecclesiastical, determined at all risks to reach firm land. When once he gave in his adhesion to the United Societies, he never faltered or turned back. And he touched ground early enough to spend forty-six toilsome years in the pastorate.

Macmillan's *conscientiousness* was a characteristic Scottish quality, which accounted for occasional apparent inconsistencies. A Scotsman must have his "scrupulosities:" must "lift up his testimony." And it was a time of hairsplitting dialectics. The great question of the day was, as it has ever been in Scotland, the relation of the Church to the State. That question has assumed several different forms, and in our time it appears in a form which would sorely puzzle Macmillan. For, he never doubted, what all Church parties laid down as an axiom, that the State ought to recognise, confirm, and nourish the Church. Nay, more; he held, as all did, that the State ought to compel its citizens to conform to Christ's true religion. Papists and prelatists, equally with "witches" and unbelievers, should be punished by the strong arm of the law. During his own brief time as a parish minister, he had eagerly and firmly set the law in motion for such ends. But when the State sought, however remotely, to assert its authority over the true Church, to convoke and to dissolve her Assemblies, to impose civil tests and qualifications for her ministers, in short, to exact, as the price of its protection, submission to another Head than Christ; Macmillan revolted against this, and took his stand for the high Covenanting doctrine. The Church of the Covenants, as seen between 1638 and 1649, in the Golden Age of Presbytery, sat enthroned above all principalities and powers. A king, to her, was but a mortal sinner as others, whom she could set up or cast down by Christ's authority. Donald Cargill excommunicating the second Charles, Richard Cameron declaring war

against James at Sanquhar Cross, these were Macmillan's heroes and types. Upon these, he formed his own views and conduct. Yet, in the nice distinctions of a period like that of the Revolution Settlement, he could not but feel at times confused and shaken. When men like Carstares accepted the modified privileges accorded by William of Orange: when the Scottish people, as a body, settled down contentedly in a Church, which gave them full parochial freedom after a time of fear and bondage: when the leading ministers of Galloway, including his own pastor, hastened to seat themselves under the Erastian vine and fig-tree, although more than one of them had suffered and fought against prelacy: can we wonder, that a raw countryman was, for a time, impressed and carried away?

And must we not, at least, give to Macmillan the credit of pushing his way through a forest of distinctions, and reservations, and ingenious adaptations, to the old high ground where Cargill, Cameron, and Renwick made their stand? All around him, the most powerful influences worked for conformity. So much had been gained; why peril the whole Presbyterian system by setting up inopportune objections? Was not Presbytery established as the National Church Government? Were not the days of persecution and martyrdom for ever banished? In Galloway itself, was not every parish provided with its minister, duly and orthodoxly "called" by the people? As for further attainments, such as the Covenants aimed at, might they not be cautiously and gradually endeavoured? Such pleas satisfied the consciences of men like Lining and Boyd and Cameron. For a time, they lulled the conscience of Macmillan himself. But the Oath of Allegiance gave him a rude awakening. All his old scruples rushed back. The Church submitted to this "Erastian yoke;" and where were now the fine promises and prospects of a gradual enlargement of her liberties? Macmillan began to fear, that the progress was downwards, instead of upwards. And

the whole burden of Covenanting woes settled once more upon his soul. The very foundation was rotten, for Presbytery had been settled only as being "agreeable" to the people, not as being the sole divine ordinance of Christ's Church everywhere. Episcopacy was set up in England. Popery was endured in Ireland. The Assemblies of the Church were made a shuttlecock for the King's advisers to play with. The Church herself was allowed to remain impure, from a leaven of the old "malignancy," and from the supineness of her "church officers." We have seen, how these lamentations rang out in the "Grievances." Plainly enough, Macmillan's conscience was of a less pliable order, than that of most. And, unaided by great learning or high position, he drove his way alone, through every sophism, straight to the highest Covenanting ground.

There were not wanting seasons of *self-distrust*, as he struggled on to his final stand. We must frankly recognise in him that element of vacillation, which has always mingled with deep spiritual emotion. It would be a mistake to suppose, that Macmillan simply felt, that *he* was right and all others quite wrong. The patient reader will see in the narrative already given, more than one stage at which he was seized with doubt. Could so many and so learned men be "off the foundation?" What right had he, the youngest and least accomplished presbyter, to repel their repeated and tempting invitations to him to "rest and be thankful?" Such inward self-questionings led to Macmillan's partial submission to Presbytery and Assembly. Even Hepburn made terms with the Church, and Hepburn was much his senior and superior in gifts. The pent-up feelings of his heart broke out in the pulpit, in the dark days of November 1703. "They want me to 'club' with them, to make an agreement! But none such is like to be." For on the Friday, when "he went to his studies," they did not "go" with him; and this he took as a token that he must not bate a jot of his prin-

ciples, if he would keep a clear conscience. There had been a hard fight in his soul, that Friday night. Interest and personal comfort pulled one way : his high Covenanting views pulled the other. He came out of the conflict victorious over self, but excited and upset. "Once there were three that stood for the Truth," he cried from his pulpit ; "but now, I know not but there is only one. Yet though all should leave me, I am resolved to stand where I am !" In such "brave words," a sympathetic ear detects a tone that wavers. I believe the speaker was in a sea of doubts, all that bleak November. "Stand by me," he implored his rude congregation, as they sat bonneted and plaided in the little church ; "yet if you fail me, I am prepared to stand to my hazard !" We are told, that during these dark Sundays, he was "upon " his ordination text—" *Pour out your heart before Him ; God is a refuge for us.*" It is easy to picture the feelings which moved him to harp upon this string.

Then came the dreaded day of the "Visitation." A last temptation befell him. His brethren offered to let the whole prosecution drop, if he would engage to submit to them, in other words, to abandon his active testimony against the corruptions of the Church. For the last time, he hesitated. He craved half-an-hour to think. We may guess how the time was spent. When he returned, it was in a renewed excitement and fervour of soul. Sign the agreement ? never ! "The parish of Balmaghie would have a bonnie bird of me to be their minister—a brave minister—a bonnie dearie indeed—if I subscribe this till I be excused from the Libel." In such a homely outburst, the countryman stands revealed under the clergyman's coat : half-abashed before the imposing gathering, yet finding vent in his native Doric. This was perhaps the supreme struggle ; but even when deposed, a faint gleam of hope induced him to sign the extraordinary "submission" of July, 1704, which his Society friends found so "grievous and lamentable." He distrusted his



own judgment, and yielded to the pressure and influence brought to bear upon him in Edinburgh. He felt himself inferior to the eminent men there who counselled the step, and who hinted at the prospect of his restoration. Perhaps, it needed the suspicion of betrayal, whether right or wrong, to fire his blood again. This it was which made him start from his seat in church at last and cry, "I myself will preach next Sunday!" His doubts were ended. The die was cast. He was embarked in a struggle with the Church and her ally the State.

Along with Macmillan's self-distrust went a very considerable degree of *caution and shrewdness*: these also being quite native to the soil. We have noted, in the proper place, how he protested against the irregular procedure of the Presbytery from the very outset. We have seen how carefully he guarded his protestations from the suspicion of schism or divisive conduct. His excessive caution in answering questions has also been manifest. "*Would he own the 'people's paper'?*" . . . "*He would neither own it, nor disown it.*" That is an answer savouring, a hundred miles off, the still Galloway spirit, watchful against even the most inoffensive approaches. His demeanour throughout the long "Parish Schism" was carefully adjusted to the same measure. Never once did he appear in any of the numerous violent scenes which occurred, unless we believe Wodrow's unlikely story of the collision with M'Kie at a funeral. Yet his temper was quick and fervent, and Cameron even styles him a "brawler with words." The *Narrative* and his subsequent rejoinder shew a rude and lively energy, both of style and argument. There is less polish than in Cameron's work; but to compensate for this, there is harder hitting, and a quicker eye for popular repartee. Macmillan's life and conduct evinced even more markedly his Scottish shrewdness. He averted more than one disruption in the Societies by his timely concessions or suggestions.

Perhaps it was the union of two of the qualities above-mentioned, his self-distrust and his shrewdness, which partly bred a third and a very fine one, his *tolerance*. This may seem a strong term to give to one, who was at the head of a body which continued to denounce witchcraft and quakerism in the same breath, and to which George Whitfield was simply a blinded prelatist. But Macmillan from the first strove to broaden the view of his co-religionists. He stood out for a certain clerical communion and fellowship. He sought the matrimonial rite from his old friend, John Reid of Carsphairn, though this was in Cameronian eyes a black defection. He kept session with his old elders at Balmaghie. He baptized the children of Church people. He would not hear of church-going being confessed as a "sin." He gave "tokens" at Auchensaugh to some who occasionally "heard the ministers." He took no part in the military operations of the Societies. His aim seems really to have been, to live and let live, leaving time to vindicate his testimony for the "good old ways." Like Hepburn, he seems to have mellowed into a serene endurance and solemn expectation. He felt that, for himself, he had done right ; but he could not declare that everyone else had done wrong.

I doubt if Macmillan was ever much of a partisan at heart. One fact is remarkable—he made no attempt to form a sect in Balmaghie. When he departed, the parish quarrel died quickly out. Although popularly called Macmillanites, the people to whom he ministered were, as we know, the old "men of the moss-hags." As an old Cameronian dame once expressed it to me—"We didna join Macmillan ! It was Macmillan that joined us." And in this she was literally correct. Again and again, at the beginning of the controversy, he declared himself no schismatic or separatist. He was a Church of Scotland man, but the Church of Scotland had drifted away from him and his like, and he was left alone. His repugnance to the oft-

repeated suggestion, that he should ordain some others as colleagues, came as much from his staunch Churchism as from any theory of holy orders. It was in his old age that a Presbytery at length sprang up. And he died before the idea of separate charges had been mooted.

One marked feature of Macmillan's character was closely connected with this broad and tolerant spirit. It was his *affectionateness*. He was a man who formed close friendships, and dearly loved home life. The language of the Societies' "Conclusions" is touching here. They refer to "our reverend pastor," and "our faithful pastor." The panic which ensued, when he offered to resign, shewed what a hold he had on their hearts. The extent to which women figured in the commotions in Balmaghie is a token of the attachment of his flock to his person and ministry. The men were not behind, as we have seen. Macmillan's married life was singularly happy. The "Elegy" is a pleasing picture of genuine love and devoted attachment. One feels how winning a personality it must have been which gained over the high-born daughter of Earlston for a poor country manse. The consistent tradition is that Macmillan was very friendly and courteous in manner.

The *strain of poetry* in his soul lent an additional charm to his outward air and ways. Carefully examined, the *Elegy* appears a somewhat remarkable achievement for a country minister, and yet no reasonable doubt can be felt that it came from Macmillan's own pen. It reveals the qualities of kindness and tenderness which we have ventured to attribute to him, along with a delicacy of feeling and expression which impress us with the sense of a high-bred and cultured individuality. It need not be a surprise, however, to find a marked development upon the style of the *True Narrative*, since nearly twenty years had passed, and Macmillan's mind and manners had both grown in due proportion.



MACMILLAN'S MONUMENT IN DALSERF CHURCHYARD.



Altogether, one may carry away the notion of an attractive and impressive man, fit to hold his own with the best social circles, yet always keeping a homely flavour of his native soil and rocky hills. And chief of all his characteristics, even by the earliest testimony of his opponents, was his *piety*, a thing usually assumed in any clergyman, but likely to be specially eminent when thus singled out for mention. It was for his "name of piety in the bounds," says Cameron, that the Presbytery made haste to license and ordain him. And the name, we know, represented a reality preserved during a long life. No breath has ever passed on Macmillan's moral or professional character, save when party spirit dictated a groundless insinuation. His death-bed may stand beside those of distinguished Christians, for its solemn beauty and quiet pathos. Whatever faults he may have had (and every virtue has its own defect), he was indubitably a "good man."

Whether he attained to be a "great man," or just fell short of that coveted eminence, I shall leave others to decide. Certainly, he took part in a great epoch of the Scottish Church, and acquitted himself bravely and honestly. That Church has always had a way of casting out men whom she, at her heart, loved and honoured. Macmillan is one of these respected and beloved outcasts. The Church of our day has won much for which he contended and suffered; and she cannot cherish any grudge amid her gains. How much more she may yet acquire, which he would have wished, it is impossible to say. But in him she may claim one of her own children, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh; whose chief crime (if such it be) was that he longed to see her made perfect in a world full of compromises, and whose chief praise must, in this respect, be that he demanded a "spiritual independence" such as now her best and most loyal sons are willing to defend.





Appendix of Documents, Edited from the  
Original MSS. or Prints.

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*C O N T E N T S.*

- (1) MACMILLAN'S "TRUE NARRATIVE," printed 1704.
- (2) MACMILLAN'S "GRIEVANCES," printed 1704.
- (3) THE PRESBYTERY'S "LIBEL," printed 1705.
- (4) MACMILLAN'S "PROTESTATION, DECLINATURE, AND AP-  
PEAL," 1708.
- (5) MACMILLAN'S "ELEGY ON MISTRESS MARY GORDON," 1723.
- (6) A LETTER TO A DYING FRIEND, Oct. 26, 1741.



## I.

A True Narrative of the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright against one of their number ; and that to the sentence of deposition ; to which is added the Grievances.

[Anonymous, in 1704. This reprint is from a copy in the possession of William Macmath, Esq., F.S.A., Edinburgh. It lacks the title-page. Above the first page is the italicized sentence--“ *Presbytery is no friend to itself in its unjust censures and sentences.*”]

Albeit a good name is rather to be chosen than riches, yet how difficult is it either to obtain it, or preserve it when got ! And that because of Satan's emissaries, whose tongues he employs to the disgrace of religion and the contempt of the godly ; and that by opprobrious speeches and heart-piercing words, with which there is a sycophanting age that is not a little acquainted. Such, I mean, as love to carry the bell of popular applause to fright those demons and creatures of darkness (as by them they are judged), who would either amuse \* them or yet disturb them, in the peaceable exercise of such an occupation, as would make them twofold more the children of wrath than what they were.

But as it is a task insuperable for any to engage to stop the mouths of all those who are maliciously set to cry down the innocent and up themselves ; so I, for my part, shall never undertake it, unless they will promise to meet me at that bar that has judgment running down as waters, and righteousness as

\* *i.e.*, distract or interrupt. —ED.

mighty streams. And there, a just cause will advocate for itself without any interlocutor.

But this I say, with reference to those who are as busybodies, raising and spreading reports to the keeping up of contention and engendering strife. Yet, seeing there has been a way pathed by the libel and sentence, for strangers and wayfaring men to walk with slanders, and the balbutiating \* words of “schismatic and separate,” it is necessary to satisfy the traveller so far, as to represent true matter of fact; for intentions comes † not within the sphere and horizon of *judicii mentis discursivae*, ‡ and so cannot be the grounds of a sentence or yet of a censure, but at the bar of a man’s own conscience. Therefore, my purpose herein is to present the case as truly it is, without prevaricating in a jot, so far as memory serves.

And for the better knowledge of this affair, I shall premise some considerations, and then give answer to all the particular grounds upon which he was sentenced. And this I do the rather because though he had pursued after peace, yet there is no signs of obtaining it, or yet the calumnies and aspersions to cease; though I believe, by this time, for what evidence he has given both of patience and condescension, § impartial persons might safely construct that he loves not to be called the Son of Contention, or yet Discord.

Therefore, in the first place, (1). I premise, that there is not one article of the libel separately, or all completely considered, that, in the judgment of any impartial person, will bear the censure or sentence of deposition, as will afterwards appear, and that either materially or formally. For, if we may speak as to

\* *i.e.*, stammering or misleading.—ED.

† The writer must not be charged with ignorance of grammar, where he gives a singular verb to a plural noun. This was common enough in 1700.—ED.

‡ *i.e.*, the judgment of the reflecting mind.—ED.

§ *i.e.*, concession.—ED.

the formality of the Presbytery's procedure, he could never be charged with contumacy, and summary excommunication cannot be warranted without contumacy, or frequent relapses into the same sin. And wherein doth summary deposition differ from summary excommunication? Yea, in my judgment, the sentence of deposition ought to be as deeply considered (if not more) as excommunication. Now, as to the summariness of this sentence, the Presbytery had it not 48 hours under their consideration. [And there is nought here said, but what is agreeable to the expressions of some of the members]. And, he was no panel, till he received the libel and citation, which was but 17 days before they passed their sentence. And, they never took it one Presbytery diet to their consideration. And, of 15 ministers, there was six absent when the sentence passed;\* so that there was but 7 (besides Moderator and Clerk) of the whole Presbytery present. And if the libel had been weighty, or yet the person chargeable with contumacy, the accusers would have had more for their vindication. But while otherwise, as shall be made evident, what can they say in their own defence?

(2). That he was not (as the libel testifies) accused, nor yet cannot, of unsoundness in the faith either as to doctrine or otherwise, or yet of an unchristian scandalous carriage, unbe-

\* The Presbytery minutes, 28, 29, 30 December, 1703, shew that three sederunts were held. At the first, December 28, only 2 ministers, out of the 15 competent to sit as judges, are marked *absent*. At the second, December 29, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 2 more are noted as having withdrawn. At 5 p.m. same day, 2 more failed to appear. Final judgment was therefore passed by 9 ministers. At the first sederunt, 12 elders were present. They remained to the close of the meeting; but next day, only 4 attended. There were also 2 ministers as correspondents from the Presbytery of Wigtown. The court which gave sentence consisted therefore of 11 ministers and 4 elders, out of a possible 17 ministers and 16 elders. Macmillan's contention is that sentence was given by a *minority* of the Presbytery.—*Ed.*

coming the ministry, or thirdly, of supine negligence towards those amongst whom he laboured, or fourthly, of the want of a competency of gifts and aptness to teach, suiting the abilities of the people amongst whom he used his endeavours. All which his auditors are obliged to say, and none of his accusers can win beyond it and speak truth. And it is known, that the Presbytery judged so, and expressed themselves so.

(3). Notwithstanding of what endeavours has been used secretly, and otherwise, by self-seeking men, to alienate the hearts of the people from him; yet the design and intentions of such were so far crushed through the goodness of God, that there was nothing seen but amity between them and him, and at this time nought to the contrary. As for those who can betray their Master with a kiss, and say, *Is it I?* they have their Master to reckon with. And if they answer Him, I ought not to condemn them.

(4). None of his accusers or others can say, *What is this new doctrine whereof thou speakest?* But on the contrary, he taught that which has been, should be, and will be, if ever we expect our God to dwell graciously in the midst of us, and the priests to have the Urim and Thummim inscribed on their breastplate, and we to have the encomium or praise that is said of Zebulun, *Blessed art thou, O Zebulun, in thy goings out, and Issachar, in thy tents.\**

(5). As such a sentence ought not to be passed on such slender grounds, so likewise, there is this to be said, that there is not an article of the libel, but what, by conference, privately and in open Presbytery, with the ministers, and the probation of witnesses to the contrary, were found false and of no weight, and that before a sentence passed. As shall be made appear.

\* Cameron accuses Macmillan here of a mistranslation. In the Authorised Version, it is "*Rejoice, Zebulun, etc.,*" Deut. 33, 18.

(6). There has been no documents, nor convincing arguments, brought from the Word of God, to evince the equity of this sentence, though the Presbytery's vindication, and Christian satisfaction, required it; notwithstanding that this was often sought. But if what is said in the second premiss \* be true (as none can contradict it and speak truth), then all the arguments they can produce will never prove their sentence to be just. And an extract of the sentence could not be had till some months passed over, and yet they would have everyone believe, by an implicit faith, that what they have done is just.

(7). That he never taught, privately nor publicly, separation from the doctrine and faith of the Church of Scotland, or any part of the attained-to work of Reformation, as all that knew can witness. Yea, the contrary was seen, that it was still towards the purity of both doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, that he bended; and never, Laodicea like, to commend or allow of a lukewarm temper. So that there is no grounds why he should be branded with a "separate," or yet "schismatic," till it be once proven that he hath either separated or divided from the truth. And those who can mockingly say, that their Church is come to nought, they would know whether they speak for God or man. If they speak for God, it cannot be but with grief that small beginnings are so quickly crushed. But it's no new thing! And if they speak for man, they should take heed, that the vengeance of God give not them a set, that they shall not so easily recover.

(8). That it is more than evident from the Presbytery's confession, that the libel was not ground to found a sentence of deposition upon, when, after it was publicly read, and he accordingly publicly accused, they were willing to pass from all, without so much as a public rebuke. And yet they will stand on the top

\* *viz.*, that nothing was libelled, which properly inferred deposition.—ED.

of it now, and tell you that he was justly deposed. Now, where, according to the fifth premiss,\* they got the grounds for their sentence, let any person judge.

(9). Albeit he is most sadly branded with lies and aspersions, by both the libel and extract of the sentence, that he should have uttered publicly both of the Presbytery and this National Church, as also which he should have expressed in papers; yet, though often sought, that justice he could not have as an extract of these lies and aspersions. How then should he be convinced of the truth of this, or how should such injuries be suffered to go? This he cannot but say, *That it's not fairplay to stab a man behind his back.*

(10). That the reason of his declining before a sentence passed, was because he judged the Presbytery acted tyrannically and partially, the libel not deserving such a sentence, as was said by their own confession; and there being others† who were as deeply engaged as he was in anything he could be charged with. Whereby it would seem they were more set to exalt pride, humour and passion, and make them the ruler, than that reason and equity should take place. And that he was indiscreetly dealt with, let the reasons in the protest and declinature‡ testify, together with what was expressed of him and the people, and that by upbraiding them with perjury. So that it was not the authority, but the exercise of the authority, which he declined. The amendments of the libel before the Presbytery's subscription, after that it had been several days in his custody, may discover the Presbytery's partiality, though there were no more; unless they can prove that the rest fell from the Grievances. Whereas, in the libel, he is held as the only person that had

\* viz., that not one article of the libel was proved.—*Ed.*

† viz., Messrs. Reid and Tod.—*Ed.*

‡ i.e., the protest and declinature given in at the meeting on December 28 by Macmillan.—*Ed.*



offered the Grievances, and the other two blotted out. But does not their agreement with the rest, since the sentence passed, evince also their partiality? And yet it is known that if the Presbytery had dealt impartially, he had been reckoned as *accidens*, and not as *proprium*, which could be very well instructed,\* but hereby I am not an accuser of the Brethren.

(11). That he had neither a direct nor an indirect hand in the people's paper,† or any way else, so far as he remembers. And when by the Presbytery he was required if he would own it, answered, that he would neither own it nor disown it. And I hear none that can tell, if their paper was twice read over; which if it was not, his answer is not to be wire-drawn, as it is by the Presbytery. For it was in his absence that that paper was given in, and so far as he remembers, it was not read over to him before they asked his judgment. To which it may be subjoined, that whatever is not contained in the libel is so extraneous to the grounds of a sentence, that in the judgment of all thinking men they will be ridiculed, that makes it one. Otherwise, a minister must suffer for all the faults of his parishioners. And what a braw thing it were for the delinquent to have his pastor in the same condemnation! How few ministers should there be, sometimes, to judge the rest, though innocent!

(12). That the rise and grounds of the controversy betwixt the Presbytery, the rest, and him, was the "Grievances." As is manifest (1) from the peace and concord that there was before these grievances came in agitation, though it is granted that the Oath and Bond‡ were that which brought the rest on foot; (2) from the bad treatment that was found from once the "Grievances" were offered, as is evident from the first reasons of pro-

\* *i.e.*, expounded.—*Ed.*

† Handed in during Macmillan's absence at the meeting on December 28, and signed by 87 persons.—*Ed.*

‡ The oath of allegiance to Queen Anne.—*Ed.*

test and declinature, as I suppose ;\* (3) from the Synod's Act anent those who offered the "Grievances," which Act makes it evident, though there were no more ; (4) from the memorandum (they will not let it be called a libel, though it had the effects of a libel, viz., censure), † given in to the Presbytery (I shall not say given down by the Presbytery, though none can think the contrary) by the Synod, where, according to the Presbytery's confession, there are some of the "Grievances" particularly specified, for which the offerers are to be censured ; (5) from Mr. Andrew Cameron's words, in his "Letter to the parishioners," approved by many of the ministers of the Presbytery, and I doubt not but by all, though maybe not judicially ; where he looks upon it as a slight, in offering grievances to them, "where," says he, "we bare with their indiscretion in that." But how was it borne ? With meekness and patience ? Yea, the contrary has appeared, and maybe more afterwards ; (6) from the great pains that was taken, and the speedy despatch that was made, to have these "Grievances" at the Commission. But for what was it ? To have them redressed ? No, but that the grieved might be accused as troublers of the peace of their Israel. And that was evident, that it was not for redress, in what one ‡ of them said, that *before he had carried them out, he had rather undergone censure* ; (7) from the Presbytery's epilogue subjoined to the end of their "Answers to the Grievances,"§ where they tax the persons who offered them, with separation and division. And why ? What is the matter ? Had the Presbytery received aught declaring a separation ? Sure, no-

\* viz., that the Presbytery took no steps to redress the Grievances.—*Ed.*

† This refers to a memorandum from the Synod read in Macmillan's hearing on November 2, 1703 : after which the Presbytery resolved, for peace sake, to pass all "bygone misbehaviours" of Macmillan.—*Ed.*

‡ This refers to Cameron.—*Ed.*

§ Read at meeting of Presbytery, August 17, 1703.—*Ed.*

thing at all. Now, let all these things be considered, and see whether or not the rise of the controversy was from the "Grievances." And has not their practice declared this to all beholders, with those that offered the "Grievances," that they were that which displeased them?

These things premised. I shall proceed to the articles of the Libel, and rehearse true matter of fact; for, as was said, intentions cannot be grounds of sentence, neither is it by these that the criminal comes to be condemned.

I. Then, as to the first four Articles of the Libel, he cannot own them. Not that he fears them; but *First*, because, as he alleges, his words are quite perverted to another strain, as in all conferences with the ministers he shewed, and they cannot charge him with prevarication, from the first to the last. *Secondly*, when he uttered these words (as is said in the Libel), he was neither desired to subscribe to what he had said, as is usual in the case of a panel, or yet interrogated first or last, if he would adhere to them. How then should they bear faith against him? *Thirdly*, the ministers that conferred with him, November 3, 1703, concerning these Articles, found him then what he is yet; to whom he told his own expressions, but could not own theirs; who then enquired if he would pass from the informality of what he did that day, in the which he shall have expressed himself as in the Libel: answered that he was willing to recede or resile from it entirely, altogether. *Fourth*, as was needful, he being unclear in that matter, the Presbytery Clerk, though required before a sentence passed, never solemnly attested the authenticness of these records. Now then, should such expressions be fixed upon him as his deed, or yet be in the articles of a Libel, since nothing of this can be denied? And his ingenuity\* to the Presbytery in other things, whereof he was ac-

\* *i.e.*, ingenuousness.—ED.

cused, leaves no room to suspect him here. And, albeit he had expressed himself so as they say, yet no ground of a sentence, since he had so far retracted as to disown these expressions as his. *Fifth*, the Libel and Extract clashes one against another. The Libel says he refused to give reasons; the Extract says he gave the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen as cumulative to other defections. Now, here is not only a contradiction, but a downright disingenuity, unless they had proposed to sentence him on the Extract, and not on the Libel. For if justice had been given, their reasons should have been in the Libel, that so he might have all fairplay. *Sixth*, the Extract follows not the Libel in order in these four articles, as it does in the rest. And since he called them in question as his words, the Extract and Principal herein should have been most exact. From what is said, it is needless to set down his expressions which at that time he uttered; and any that pleaseth may have them afterwards.

II. As to the 5th Article, there is none of the ministers will say, that in all their conferences with him about it, but that he expressed himself with respect to the Constitution. And it was told some of them so, by them that heard him. And the Libel testifies so much by his own acknowledgments. And the law of nations grants *that a man be the interpreter of his own language*. So that there is no ground to censure here, and hold out pique and prejudice. But, besides, since the Presbytery knew that his thoughts, far less his expressions, never centred on that, that they preached not faith and repentance, it is a downright censuring upon the "Grievances," as this comes in amongst them, of going back with the Constitution to the year 1592. And though it should be said that the Church was rightly constitute then, it is answered that in *gradu positivo* it's granted, but *comparativo* it's denied. Because she attained no more afterward. So that the Presbytery's censuring herein clearly shews that it was the "Grievances" that displeased them. And they

aggravate the telling of the truth to a calumniating the whole Church, as they say in their Extract. And who would have thought that the Presbytery would have censured any for telling the truth? And though they were not ignorant of his mind herein, as above, and that before a sentence passed; yet, nevertheless, it is a proven article with them. I only add what the prophet Nahum says, Chap. I., 2nd and 3rd verses—*God is jealous, etc.* \* Only this more, that because truth is spoken, therefore it's proven that is good; and because it's spoken therefore the speaker should be condemned. That is not our Lord's way, neither was it ever preached by his apostles. And the native consequence of this Article is, that a minister for speaking truth should be condemned, and so condemned, that he should preach no more truth. We had need to pray that the Lord would avert such judges, or rather such judgments. For it is a clear truth, and a great evil too, that the Church went near a hundred years back.

III. As to the 6th Article, which was that he kept not the Synod's Fast—he was absent some Presbytery days, and from two Synods. This is another of their proven articles. And though they had reasons for all,† yet nothing less will satisfy than deposition. But what partiality here, when others were guilty of the same things, as well as he; and yet they were not deposed. But can this be an article for censure, when they had reasons for all, before a sentence passed, as soon as he was enquired at, as shall be made evident by and by. As to the Synod's Fast, it was told them that he was so distressed in body upon the Monday, that he could not prepare for the Tuesday; *second*,

\* Nahum I., 2-3—"God is jealous and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth and is furious: the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. . . ."—ED.

† *i.e.*, excuses for all absences.—ED.

according to the Extract, he read the causes and kept a Fast afterwards; *third*, when this was judicially proven, it was answered by a brother, that there was some of the brethren that did not observe the day more than he, and yet was not censured.

As to his absence from some Presbyteries, which in the Extract are called four, *first*, it is observable that the Libel and Extract does not charge him with a trampling upon the Presbytery's authority, in refusing to give reasons when sought for, save in the first four articles, where the Libel and Extract clashes one against another, as was shown. And the *first two* diets fall in with these four Articles, and so are answered already. *Thirdly*, as to the third diet, the Presbytery knew he was out of the bounds, and was necessarily detained upon the Tuesday, whereof he sent them notice, though it was slighted, as he afterwards told when enquired. *Fourthly*, as to the fourth diet, though mentioned in the seventh Article, yet I shall answer it here. The reason of his absence, for this diet, is mentioned in the Libel; which is, not finding satisfaction in the Presbytery's answers to the "Grievances," as the reply will shew. And from this they draw their inference, that he resolves to be resolute in separating from the Presbytery, and that he expects a paper to come out shortly, that will warrant his so doing. All that I shall say upon this is, that I shall not greatly wonder, though one man that has but two eyes, draw his inferences wide, when so many eminent lights runs so far away with theirs. That maxim, that *vis unita fortior* \* never failed till now! But that the reader may know, that the reason given *ut supra* was not so very contemptible, let this at the same time suffice, that in defending the Oath of Allegiance, they grant the Magistrate a right to dispose of ministers' benefices as he pleaseth. So that,

\* "Union is strength," or, "Two heads are better than one."—*Ed.*

consequently, it is by the Magistrate, and not by the Word of God, that ministers have a right to their stipends. This, their assertion, Mr. Rutherford proves, is contrary to the Word of God, Acts of Parliament, and General Assemblies, in a little book entitled *A Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ*.\*

As to his absence from two Synods, the ministers are not ignorant that he preached none for two Sabbaths immediately preceding the one in April; and for the other, the Libel tells what is the reason of his absence, though curtly; his being gravelled at some harsh expressions, that were uttered at several occasions. And though the Libel omits the expressions, yet he judicially told them, which were—"There are three gone out from us, because they were not of us; but they have left Christ behind;" and—"The Devil hath casten a circumference about, till at length he had come to this place, where he is beginning to play his pranks in employing his emissaries." This was understood by the hearers of them who had offered the "Grievances." And—"They had spit on the Confession of Faith, and were of the mildew † of hell." All which the auditors applied to them who had offered the "Grievances." And the Libel says nought in opposition to it, but rather in confirmation of it, while it says he reckoned himself gravelled with what was spoken against Separatists. Now, to what party can such expressions be applicable, but to those who had denied the faith and turned apostates? And dare they say that either the Cameronians or yet Hebronians, ‡ has done so? And their auditors can witness that it was

\* *A Testimony to the Covenanted Work of the Reformation*, by Samuel Rutherford; 1661. This is probably the "little book" referred to.—*Ed.*

† *Mildew*—query, *milieu*?—*Ed.*

‡ *Hebronians*. This must be Macmillan's coinage to indicate the adherents of Hepburn of Urr, with whom, at this time, he had some relations. The ordinary name was Hebronites.—*Ed.*



neither Malignants, Prelates, Papists, nor Atheists, that they were speaking of. To whom, then, could they be applied by those who were auditors but to the persons above said? And if they be such (as God forbid), they should have been deposed wholesale, altogether!

IV. For their 7th Article, which is in part answered already, and from his reason which he gave (as above) for that diet's absence, they draw a subconsequence, which is this, that it was contrar the protest and agreement. Whereby he comes to be sadly accused as a breaker of promises and ordination engagements. Now, their eighth Article being of the same size with the most uncharitable drawn consequences of this, which is the weightiest thing they have to charge him with, which, if according to what they say, is so indeed; wherefore, I shall endeavour to satisfy the reader herein without evasions.

The 8th, as I said, is the same with the seventh, except in so far that the eighth Article says, that he should have said to some of his parish, that the Presbytery and he were agreed, and on the Sabbath after, said, that for aught he could see, no such agreement would yet be.

Now, as is promised, I shall endeavour to satisfy the reader in the truth of this matter. Only, let it be minded (1) that the Presbytery will not say, that he came under any sinful engagements to them; and if he did, there is no law that requires the keeping of them: (2) that all compacts and covenants, as they are mutual and stipulatory, binding each party conditionally to the performance of what they have engaged—that then, and in that case, the party-breaker frees the other, that is, the party-observer, of what he otherwise might have sought, by virtue of the compact that is the breaker: (3) that though a person may precipitantly utter his thoughts at one time, which afterwards he sees convenient to alter, yet here is no contradiction, but only a correction. And if this should be denied, it should either



place man in a state of perfection, that he could not err ; or then degrade him below a beast, that when he fell in the mire, he should use no means for his own recovery. So this I take to be his case, and that what he said, upon the Sabbath, was but a correction of what he had before so rashly spoken. Wherein he is rather to be commended, than disapproved. For, for his saying that there was no agreement like to be, and censuring therefor, is the height of tyranny, because it is a lording over the conscience, and this most cruel—that a person shall not have liberty to express his thoughts of what is in controversy, without the hazard of such a sentence. For grant he had used such an expression as “clubbing,” yet it is not words but things that, in such sentences, is chiefly to be considered. As for example, though a man should say he will strike his neighbour, yet is he to be punished, for his so saying, as he that is actually guilty? But now, the substance of the expressions bears that there had been a difference, and that it was yet like to continue. And because he said so, therefore he is to be censured ! This says, on the matter, that, be it right or wrong, if he jump not with us in all things, we will depose him. What is this, but the tying up of the conscience? Which yet is more evident, when all that they have done must be acknowledged as just, or then, they will tell you, they cannot in conscience join with him, or yet recommend him to others to be joined with. And if he speak, when required, in opposition to this, they will protest against him. I know not if it was ever so in any criminal court, that the panelled might not give answers to what he was interrogated upon, without being protested against. Yet it was so with him. All that I shall say of this is, that these sort of mercies are cruel. But right or wrong, let every one judge.

But then, as to these agreements which they speak of the breach of, whereby to the people he is rendered so odious, that the ministers (as they say) tells them, that he is not to be be-

lieved the word he speaks, which is a most heavy charge ; yet I hope, as shall be made manifest, that is a most gross reflection. Therefore, I shall, for the reader's satisfaction, set down the agreements first and last, which were communioned publicly before a sentence passed. And in the protest and declinature; his reasons are set down for speaking, as the Presbytery says, contrar the agreement, although his reasons were never sought by the Presbytery ; and as themselves know, that when they made enquiry into his words, yet never into the causes, which ought to have been as well as the other, or then they could not be reckoned just in their judgment. Then *secondly*, I shall set down what he has to say for his own vindication. And from all, let it be judged, whether or not people has grounds so to accuse him.

Then, as for that which the Presbytery speaks of, August 13, 1703, it is as follows :—

*“ This our Protestation, being for the exoneration of our consciences, is not to be interpreted a separation from the Church of Scotland, but to have these our Grievances redressed in an orderly way. And hereby, we agree to concur in our capacity for redress of the same ; and in other duties according to the Word of God and Covenanted Work of Reformation.”*

This is all, as to this time, which was subscribed by all the three.

The other agreement, which they speak of, was November 3, 1703, which is, *That he was willing to recede or resile from what he did the first day alone ; and enter in with Messrs. Reid and Tod at the Presbytery at Kells, where the “ Grievances ” were offered, and adhere to the Protestation as above ;* which was all he would engage to. Whereupon, after that it was communioned in open Presbytery, he was dismissed for a considerable space.

And after he was called in, there was a paper read to him, shewing that he had passed from all that he did the first day, and ever since. To which he replied, that *that was to pass from the "Grievances" entirely*. Whereupon he sat down, after that he had told them he would add here no more than what he had already said. Upon which, he was inquired, if he owned his ordination engagements. Answered, *that he did ; for he knew no sinful engagements that ever he came under, and if he did he disowned them*. To this there was no subscribing.\* Now, this is all that the ministers and others has to charge him with, as a person most dissolute and loose.

Now, in the next place, let us hear what he has to say for himself. Then, in the 1st place, it is to be remembered that they could not charge him with a breach of the Protest, till this last agreement, which they spoke of, was made ; as is evident from their records, and from his being with them at prayers and privy censures the day before this agreement. 2nd. That the rise of that agreement, November 3, 1703, was not from the breach of the Protest, as is evident from his joining with them as above. 3rd. The occasion, then, of this agreement was that the Presbytery looked not upon that part of the Protest, as above, a sufficient enough tie upon the protesters, as is evident from what is said ; there being no breach of it on his part, he being every day with the Presbytery that they met, till this new agreement they speak of. 4th. The Presbytery themselves loosed him from the obligation of the Protest ; and that, first, by their seeking, from Presbytery to Presbytery, new terms of agreement, which was superfluous if they had looked upon the Protest as sufficient ; secondly, by their saying, in open Presbytery, that the "Wild Folk," as they term them, would say that they would not separate from the Church of Scotland. Now,

\* *i.e.*, no signatures were adhibited to these statements.—*Ed.*

whatever ground they had, from other expressions, for saying so ; yet it gives no ground to quarrel at that part of the Protest which they once accepted of, because this is not a quarrelling at a breach on the protester's part, but a quarrelling with themselves that had accepted of such terms of agreement. Now, how can they charge him with the breach of this agreement? It is most ridiculous, considering what is said, unless that they look upon the " Wild Folk's Church " and theirs as all one. And that cannot be, because themselves makes the distinction, in saying the " Wild Folk " would say as much, and yet not reckon themselves to own their Church ; which is fairly in it. So consider how little ground they have here.

Then, as to the other agreement, November 3, 1703, as above, *First*, it is to be remembered that the ground of the breach of this agreement was taken from his saying that there was no agreement like to be, though it was expected. *Second*, the Presbytery never enquired into the reasons why he so spake (as was said), though they had a considerable time to do so before the sentence was passed. For though he set them down in the Protest, yet they were never sought by the Presbytery. *Third*, that after they had read *to pass from all he did the first day and ever since*, that he replied (as above), that it was a passing from the " Grievances," and these terms he would not adhere to. *Fourth*, that new emergencies arising from the Presbytery's part (as shall appear) destructive of the agreement will never, in the judgment of any, involve him in the breach thereof. Though they should say that he knew of those things before, yet he may safely say that he had them not under serious consideration till afterwards. And yet he opposed such terms in the meantime, as he alleged them destructive of the " Grievances," and acquiesced to what he had formerly said, and judged that therewith they had been satisfied. *Fifth*, they could not rightly charge him with the breach of this agreement till once they had

known the causes. For, albeit that agreement had been under an oath, he might warrantably have spoken all that he said, and holden by it, till a better understanding had been of the matter, and whether or not such measures as they took was destructive of that which had been in debate, to wit the "Grievances," and by him it is judged yet to be so, and then was also. So that the grounds for his saying that he judged there could be no agreement yet were (1) the Libel, or call it Memorandum, given by the Synod to the Presbytery, containing several things concerning those who had offered the "Grievances," for which they are to be censured, and that for speaking publicly against the "Grievances," as particularly the Oath of Allegiance.

Now that it was the "Grievances" that offended them, it is yet more clear if we consider (1) that he was with the Presbytery in prayers and privy censures, where they had nothing more to charge him with, than any of the Presbytery; (2) the present moderator declared this, only with the exception of the "old business"; (3) they had the Act in custody, in the meantime, that allowed the Presbytery that if these three who offered the "Grievances" did not answer the Presbytery satisfyingly, both as to doctrine and practice, that they should call for assistance from neighbouring Presbyteries, or then a Synod *pro re nata*, or then a Committee of the Commission of the Kirk, and judge as they saw cause: and this was another reason for his so speaking. Which Act was given down by the Synod; (4) that when he was appointed to intimate a Visitation, he was no panel, having neither a libel nor under citation; (5) that when he objected to the correspondents being present at an orderly Visitation, it was answered by the Presbytery that they walked conform to the Synod's Act as above. A third reason for his speaking so was another Act, which seeks the renewing the National Covenant without the Solemn League; the evil of which is held forth in the Protest.

There was an impracticable and unprecedented method, by way of censure, taken with one of those who offered the "Grievances," as if a person were to give satisfaction in another congregation than where the scandal was committed.

The Act for calling assistance from neighbouring Presbyteries has in it that either these three were contumacious to the Presbytery both as to doctrine or practice (which cannot be); or that it was merely upon the account of the "Grievances." There will no person get a third. \*

Now, from what is said, how can he be accused of the breach of this agreement? Who sees not that there was grounds sufficient for all that he said? And till the Presbytery declare and shew the contrary, both as to such Acts and their practice with him, he has just ground to challenge them with the breach of this agreement, and that to an egregious height, unless that they judged he had passed from the "Grievances," and look upon it as his sin for offering them.

So, reader, thou may see that there is not the least shadow to challenge him as they do. But how perform they their part, which they promised at the Assembly? What was redressed there that was wrong? The breach of *this* engagement is not noticed! I shall only add that truth has a time fixed and set, and innocency also, when they shall get up the head in despite of malice, violence, and oppression. And to conclude, if justice and truth might plead for themselves, there would be no grounds for a sentence, or yet for calumnies and aspersions. But I proceed.

V. For the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, as they were referred to the probation of witnesses, [and] were, when tried, found false, as the Extract proves; yet they will have 9 and 11 proven, the one substantially, the other eventually. As to the Ninth,

\* *i.e.*, alternative.—ED.

they prove it as to the substance. But how can this be? For the witnesses denied, that ever they heard such expressions as are in the Libel ; and he never confessed them.

But what is the crime? That after he had said there was no agreement yet like to be, that though they should all leave him, he resolved to stand where he was for a season. His reasons for so saying are as above, for it was all at one time spoken. Now, what is their inference from this? It is, that he accuseth the ministers for not standing to the truth ; to which I would answer, that, if the Presbytery accuse themselves, he ought not therefore to be condemned. For since he had not such expressions, the world cannot prove them to be his, unless by the subornation of false witnesses.

It would seem, that when this sentence passed, Justice her handmaid Mercy had been like Baal's God—not within cry ! Otherwise, she would have said, *Why smitest thou thy fellow-servant ?* Or then, *Why sittest thou to judge according to law, and commandest to smite contrary to law ?*

As to the Eleventh, they prove it eventually, this is, neither physically nor morally, and so no probation ; no more nor a judge accusing a parent of homicide proves him to be guilty, because his child testifies to the judge that he will own the relation of a child to a parent, accuse as he will, and that because he is not convinced of anything to the contrary. And the same way, this article is proven. For, because his people would adhere to him, though they \* accused him, till they saw grounds for their doing otherwise ; or, which is almost the same, because his people condemns him not ; therefore, by their law, he is guilty—an odd sort of probation, I must confess.

As for the people's paper, it is answered on the 7th premiss. And because they make it the fourth ground of his sentence, I

\* *i.e.*, the Presbytery.—*Ed.*



shall only add a passage further of a minister, not far from the bounds, who when delated for drunkenness (and, as is alleged, guilty), his exculpators is ready to swear he was not guilty, and the minister always denies the act. Now, I ask these judges, guilty or not guilty? Guilty, he cannot be, because he denies, and his exculpators swear it. *No !* says the judge here ; *guilty he is, because they both deny it ; for there's a compact betwixt them !* Then, I answer, that according to this law, he got not justice when he was not deposed. Now, consider what sort of ground this is for a censure. For, according to our laws, it is held as a maxim, that *licet cuilibet protestare vel supplicare*,\* without censure. But this is more strange, that *he* should be censured for a protest of *theirs* !

VI. For the 13th article, it is, as they say, proven. But how is it proven? No otherwise than by a suspense of the judgment. And any that has common sense may see it is no more. And yet, with them, it is proven, for which, as they say, he is to be censured.

If it had been a delation against him, though neither confessed nor proven, yet it would have had some weight by † what it has here, though they had said it was proven *because* it was a delation. For then, they might have said, he was delated, therefore proven. But it is not a delation, but an interrogation, as—"Will ye bide by what you said in public, contrar the agreement?" [The 7th and 8th articles tell of this.] *Answered*, he was not ripe to tell his judgment yet. "Will ye subscribe to exercise your ministry orderly?" *Answered*, he would give no answer that night. Therefore, by them, this article is proven! And not only so, but he calumniates the whole Church! [See for this, Extract, page 14].

\* "Any man may protest or petition to a court."—*Ed.*

† Compared with.—*Ed.*



Now, may it not be said, that "Truth is fallen in the streets and Equity cannot enter," when such articles are made the grounds of a sentence ; and not only so, but when such groundless calumnies and aspersions passes up and down current for truth ? It's just as if a man should say to his neighbour, "Sir, will you be drunk to-morrow ?"

"I will not tell you !"

"Will you go to the Church and worship God on the Sabbath ?"

"I will not tell you at this time."

"O," says his neighbour ; "this man is a drunkard, an atheist, and a Sabbath-breaker !"

Ask the man how he knows that ?

"Very well !" says he ; "for, when I enquired if he would drink drunk the morrow and observe the Sabbath, he would not tell me ! Therefore, he is both a drunkard, a breaker of the Sabbath, and an atheist !"

The application is easy.

But how find they out that he calumniates the whole Church ? That I cannot see. It was a loss that such persons had not been sent on the search of Daedalus his clue, for I think they would soon have found it out ! But let it be remembered for the future, that what lies and calumnies are casten upon his name by any, he will hold them as calumniators of the brethren till they make them out, and must challenge them as emissaries sent out on purpose by the Accuser of the brethren, to work him service. If any have aught to lay to his charge, they would take Christ's way with it, in telling of it first to himself, and not behind his back ; for by this way there is no possibility to get himself defended. Therefore, before any accuse him, first acquaint himself, and then, if he had nought to answer, blaze it abroad.

So much for the Libel. Now, what grounds can there be

gathered from it worthy of censure or deposition ; or by virtue of what law can they deprive him of his kirk ? They say that there is an Act of the General Assembly that no deposed minister should return to the place in which he served when his sentence passed. To this I say, that there is no Act can be produced that can warrant the Presbytery in their procedure. And so, he ought not to be looked upon as one legally put from his charge. And therefore, the Act is of no force against *him*. Secondly, this Church hath no such Act declaring that a minister deposed cannot be reponed to the same place. And other Acts of Assemblies, till once they be by this Church attested as authentic and faithful records, cannot be put in execution against him. *Ergo*, thirdly, That Act was made against such as were compliers with malignants, as is clear from Act, Ass. 48, 441. But so it is, that this \* cannot be laid to his charge. *Ergo*, that Act excludes all partiality in such like cases. But if he were not reponed to the same, instead of following of the Act, they would walk directly contrar to it in reponing others that were otherwise chargeable of such things as could never be imputed to him, and enemies to our religion besides. But some may say that they would rather live beside a lax Episcopalian than a bigot Presbyterian. Answer—I have no reason for this if it were not for a cloak to laziness, and to have themselves commended as somebody.

But now I shall proceed to examine the rest of the grounds for their sentence, though (as was said) what is extraneous to the Libel can in no judicatory be the grounds of a sentence. For a man, if justice be observed, must have a libel, that he may know what to answer when accused. For it is not the process the judge draws up after the sentence is passed, that the criminal is to be condemned by (for that is Jedburgh Law !), but that which

\* *i.e.*, “malignancy” under the Act.—*Ed.*

he receives before a sentence. And if this method had been observed with him I cannot see how they could have drawn up twelve sheets of a process in twenty-four hours' space, as they say they have. Yea, which is more, I dare appeal to the Presbytery if they had a quarter of a sheet of a process before the Libel was drawn up. And he was never under process till he received it. And that sheet of a Libel might have been comprehended in the eighth part of it if they had pleased, and to as good purpose as it was. What way, then, it is risen to twelve sheets, might be to any wise man another Oedipus his riddle. Such bugbears may fright ignorant persons that know not the matter, but no judicious person will be much annoyed thereat. And I think strange what confidence such can pretend to, considering the emptiness of the grounds for a sentence, that says to persons they might as well hear Gibb\*, if he is alive, who burnt the Bible, and that he† is going to hell and taking the congregation with him; and he is not to be believed in a word he speaks, which on the matter is, that he is worse than an infidel, Turk, or barbarian. But it is not to be thought that wise folk speaks this, far less ministers. And so they are but some night-dreamers that fancies such things. Yet no doubt the report of such fancies and figments makes him full of tossings to and fro till the dawning, etc.‡

But then, as to the third ground for the sentence (for two are mentioned already—the Libel, as you have heard, and the People's Paper), it is this, *That he went in to preach before a quorum of ministers came to the kirk, whereby they deem that he evinced misregard to the Presbytery*. If we shall consider a little, we shall see what a gin they set for him here, so that go what way he will, they have him entangled, and they may draw the net any way they please to their own advantage.

\* The notorious fanatic of that name.—ED. † *Scil.*, Macmillan.—ED.

‡ A reference to Macmillan's anxiety under these reports.—ED.

First, then, when he was appointed to intimate the Visitation and preach, he was no panel, being neither under process nor yet citation. For he had received no Libel. According to this appointment, if he had not preached, they might have said he misregarded the Presbytery. After this appointment he received a summons and a Libel to answer such a day, but no appointment to preach. Now he is in the room of a panel, and if he preaches they may reckon him a misregarder of the Presbytery, because he had not received their warrant, in this circumstance, to preach. So now, what way he will, they may catch him. Yet he both intimated the visitation and preached, and it is probable that there was more than a quorum before he preached any. For he left two within,\* and there was one without, and several more within a musket-shot before he entered the kirk-door, and before he preached any they were generally convened. But thirdly, there was nought like a Visitation observed, either with the people, or yet with him. For they were never inquired at, how they pleased either his doctrine or walk, and if he was diligent in his pastoral duties; neither did they inquire at him, how he pleased † the people. So, since the Visitation was not called for by the parishioners, considering what is said, it was but only one pretended. And this shews yet more that it was the “Grievances” they wrought upon. If he had been a malignant, or yet a prelate, it is probable they had advised better. And yet such a distance they keep from him, that if they have rashly called him brother, they will quickly cry *peccavi*! They have committed a horrid crime, and they must have pardon!

The fourth ground for their sentence is, that he refused a very reasonable and Christian accommodation, very condescending, and according to the principles of this Church, and

\* *i.e.*, the manse.—*Ed.*

† *i.e.*, were pleased with.—*Ed.*

former agreement, November 3, 1703 (as above). Answer—That this was according to that November 3 is a downright mistake, not to say worse of it. For in that there was a promise on the Presbytery's part to concur for a redress of the "Grievances," in *that* there was none but to pass from the Libel. And yet all the redress that's gotten is only dressing\* of them that offered them! At that, there was no Libel; at this, there was. At that, he was not publicly accused; at this he is. At that the accommodation was acceptable till the deceit was found out; at this, it was never, as shall appear shortly and upon good grounds.

First then, this Christian accommodation which they speak of, was before they entered with the parishioners on the probation of the Libel as it was. So, the Presbytery sought a subjection to that which, on probation, was found false. And so [it is] no Christian accommodation to subject † to lies. For there was no exception in this accommodation, as to the Libel when found true or false, that then they would accommodate. Secondly, it is probable, ‡ that he sought oftener than once, that the witnesses might be called and the Libel proven; which gave no ground to say, that he refused to be under their correction. Thirdly, the Presbytery cannot say, that he refused to subject to their admonition when proven; and that was the cause, as many can attest, why he refused that paper of agreement, because, after he was publicly accused, the Libel being publicly read, and he before cited to appear, they were willing, upon his subscription to be under their direction, to leave him neither condemned nor vindicated. This was yet more clear from what one of them said. Says he, "Subscribe that, and then we have done." Now where was the Visitation then? So hereby, the

\* Verbal chastisement.—*Ed.*

† To submit.—*Ed.*

‡ Probable=capable of proof.—*Ed.*

accommodation was most unchristian, for there was no brotherly love in it, to leave him hanging like a herring in the net. And for them to make their own fault his punishment, and a ground of his sentence, is most unjust. For, to put the best side of this agreement, either, *first*, they saw nought in the Libel worthy of a rebuke, which I think may be safely yielded, considering what is said; or, *then*, which is worse, that communion with them on any terms was acceptable enough, and might be so to the congregation. Now, how should this be the grounds of a sentence, when he would have these reproaches wiped off, before he accepted of the accommodation? Will any condemn him herein, because he affected that which was best, and say that, therefore, he should be sentenced? And sure, it cannot be thought that rational men will do it, unless they be dreaming.

The fifth ground for their sentence was his protest and paper which he gave in, which, they say, is stuffed with falsehoods, and gross aspersions on both Presbytery, Synod, and National Church. This is weighty indeed if it be proved. But how prove they it? It is thus, as if a man should write to another his mind of the affairs of the country, and according to the best information he had, write nothing but truth. The man that receives this accuseth the other of high treason, and without ever acquainting him further, sentenced him to death by the law. The man knows nought of this till his neighbour acquaints him that he is sentenced. He enquires, for what? They answer, for what he wrote to his neighbour. The man cannot correct himself, for the sentence is passed. But, he says, there is no justice in the case. Now just so is the matter with him, so that his paper cannot be the ground of a sentence. For he may as boldly aver that it is stuffed with truths as they that say it is stuffed with lies, till once he be convicted of them. For to this hour, they have never given him yet a discovery of these lies. But that he may neither lie under such a calumny, or yet

seem to decline that which he knew to be truth, he yet again desires to be informed what these lies and aspersions are. And if that be denied, he cannot but believe that they are all truths. And, on the other hand, he is so far persuaded of the truth of things contained in this paper of his, that he rejoices in the making of it the grounds of a sentence. And he is convinced that there is not a downright nor yet designed lie in it all upon the matter. There may be some words misplaced, or left out, that should be in ; but that spoils not matter of fact.

Now, these being the grounds of the Presbytery's sentence, according to their own confession, any may see what weight they bear, and whether or not one orderly tried, called, and settled in the ministry, can be justly sentenced upon the grounds above-mentioned. For (without glorying he speaks it), besides his orderly call and admission to the ministry, he has, in the time of his exercise of it hitherto, so exercised himself (though through many infirmities and like unto some other men), as to have alway a conscience void of offence towards God and man ; as also, in some measure, to follow the Apostle's rule, at least to endeavour it, 1 Tim., iii. 2-10 ; Titus, i. 6-9 ; that so, the ministry might not be blamed. And he is bold in his God to charge his accusers to challenge him with the contrary, and say that, according to the apostle's rules, negatively considered, and conscientiously applied, he was sentenced. How then should such sentences be looked upon as binding ? Because every such sentence, that is reckoned as binding, must be founded and bottomed upon the Word of God ; that is, there must be such sins committed as the Word of God forbids, such duties slighted and neglected as the Word requires, such an unfitness for the office as that he is unfit to teach ;\* and lastly, such

\* Mr. Trail says (*Morning Exercise*, Sermon 9th), that "it is hard to determine this competent fitness, for necessities of the Church may extend or intend this matter. But in general, there must be (1) a competent know-



pains taken for his reclaiming, wherein he is wrong, as the Word of God enjoins. For a man must not be reckoned an offender for a word. It is after the second and third admonition that an heretic is to be rejected (Titus iii.)

Now to the bar of God's Word, the infallible rule, and to the rules therein laid down, he challenges all those that hold the sentence to be just, that from that Word they condemn him, before they hold him guilty. For it is not Church censures or sentences that condemns, binds, or absolves, but the Word. And the Church, herein, can do nought but, declaratively from the Word, declare the person absolved or bound. And in this, the current of all sound divines agrees, whereof several might be instanced, but passing others, see *Turretine*, Vol. III., *de Potestate Ecclesiasticâ*, page 320-322. And as it is otherwise, their sentence is not to be obeyed. Hence, the apostle argues, "whether it be better to obey God than man, judge ye." For, as there are rules laid down in the Word, whereby a minister is to be examined, tried, and proven, before he can enter the ministry; so, likewise, there are rules laid down in the Word, by which he is to be examined, tried, and proven, before he can justly be thrust from the ministry. Otherwise, their sentence is void and null of itself.\* And so we argue against the Papists, that says, the

ledge of Gospel mysteries: (2) a competent ability of utterance to the edifying of others." And this is aptness to teach, which the apostle requires, 1 Tim. iii. 2. This is one mark that Jesus has sent him, or at least this may satisfy the man's conscience. There is other three he mentions, as "(1) When a man singly designs the great end of the ministry, God's glory, and Man's salvation: (2) a conscientious diligence in all the means of attaining fitness for this work: (3) the savour of a man's ministry on the hearts and consciences of others. For a single testimony, given by ministers and Christians, that the Word dispensed by the man is savoury, and hath effect on the conscience, is a great confirmation that he is sent by Christ." Thus far he.

\* Whatever be objected here as to schism, unless they prove the 7th premiss to be false, it's not worth a fig.

sentences of their Councils are absolute. Which is denied, that they are any otherwise absolute, and so nowise binding, but as they agree to the Word of God. And though they object Matt. xviii. 17 (*If he hear not the Church, etc.*); yet it is denied, that this place will prove the Councils' absolute power. For Maccovius says, upon the place, that the words are not simply to be understood of all things (page 232, *Quaestio decima*). But the meaning, says he, is—if he hear not the Church, *scilicet*, in that which is manifest and clear from God's Word, *then* etc. *Haec sunt ejus verba:—"Sed si non audierit, scil. in re manifestâ et clarâ ex lege Dei."* And he adds, "*agit ibi Christus de offensis privatorum, nihil autem de dogmatibus fidei et morum.*" And so, the orthodox holds, that there is no sentence binding upon the conscience, but what is founded upon the Word. And if it were not so, the Word of God should not only be inverted, but perverted and wrested, because it should not be said that the Church is builded upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, but the prophets and apostles builded upon the foundation of the Church. If it should be objected, who is to be judge of such sentences as the Church may pass, whether right or wrong? Answer—neither Pope nor Council, but the Word. "To the Law and the Testimony; and if they speak and act not according to these, let them not be heard!" And whither but to *this* judge Peter and John appealed, when deposed by the chief priests, *suo more*? And to the same judge, doubtless, they appealed, who looked not upon their deposition to be valid. When, but by a controverted Assembly? \*

What ground is there to look on the deposition of a Presbytery to be valid, when upon unjust grounds, and so rashly proceeded in, that they waited not on Presbytery diet for advice, albeit of five parts there was not three present. Look back to

\* See for this *Apologetical Relation*, page 311, par. 4.?

the first premiss, so that any may see they have walked informally, rashly, and unwarrantably in their procedure, which is not a little manifest from the non-observance of the Acts of the Church, though there were no more ; where there was nothing like a following the instructions laid down by the Assemblies, even with respect to the Presbytery's form of procedure, as can be proven. For, *Assemb. 1690, Act 15, Instruction 7*, it is there statute, that the Commission proceed in matter of censure very deliberately, and this with the late conformists ; so that none may have just cause to complain of their rigidity ; and that they shall not proceed to censure but upon relevant libels and sufficient probation. And, *Ass. 1694, Act II.*, they say that "if any ministers within the bounds of the Church, of what persuasion so ever, shall be accused or informed against of any scandal, error, supine negligence, or insufficiency ; then the said Commission shall make inquiry therein, cite parties, lead witnesses, take depositions, and do any other thing that may clear matter of fact against them ; and report the same, and their diligence therein, to the next General Assembly." Now, will a Presbytery be wise above an Assembly in this ? Or may they follow any other order in their procedure with one of their members ? And if not, then their procedure with him is most unaccountable ; where there was none of these things, as above, could be laid to his charge, nor yet this form of procedure followed. And see *Ass. 1697, Act 16, Instruction 13*.

And, albeit he himself should say (which I am confident he never will), that the sentence was just ; yet it is not a whit the juster, unless it be so by the Word of God. And *Poole's Annot.*, Matt. xvi. 19, says that "Christ binds not himself to confirm the erroneous actions of men, either as to excommunications or absolutions." And the *Dutch Annotations* say, upon the same place, that "ministers' sentences are no otherwise valid than according to God's command." So, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, pag.

331, taken out of the Confession of Helvetia, says—"If the minister dealt not in all things as his Lord hath commanded him, but pass the limits and bounds of faith, then the Lord doth make void that which he doeth." And *Poole's Annot.* on Matt. xviii. 18, says—"If therefore any be cast out of any Church for professing or standing to any truth of the Gospel, or because he will not do what is sinful, we must not understand them bound in heaven, though they be bound on earth." Nor have any such excommunications any terror in them. How forcible are right words! But these arguings, what do they reprove? The Church is not, by this text, made infallible, nor is the Holy God by it engaged to defend their errors. And *Poole* on Lev., chap. xxvii., ver. 13-14, says—"For if the priest determined most unrighteously and unreasonably, as suppose an hundred times more than the value of it, I suppose no man is so void of sense as to say they were all bound to stand to the priest's determination in that case. Even as in case a man's leprosy were notorious and unquestionable, if the priest should thro' partiality pronounce him clean, this did not make him clean. And therefore all these passages of Scripture, which leave things to, and command men to acquiesce in, the determination of the priest or priests, are to be understood with this exception, that their determination be not evidently contrar to the revealed will of God, to which priests are subject and accountable. Otherwise, if the priests had commanded men to profane the Sabbath day, this would have acquitted them from the obligation of God's command of keeping it holy; which are impious and absurd to affirm." And the *Harmony of Confessions*, page 15, of the Confession of Helvetia, says—"Wherefore, seeing that the doctrine of the prophets and apostles is confirmed of God, the sentence of no man, nor of any assembly of men, is to be received simply, without trial, for the oracle of the Holy Ghost; but it is to be laid to the rule of the prophets and apostles' doctrine, that that

which agreeth therewith may be acknowledged, and that which is contrary thereunto may be confuted." And the same book, page 256, of the English Confession, says—"And touching the keys, wherein they may either shut or open the kingdom of heaven, we say with Chrysostomus, that they are the knowledge of the Scriptures; with Tertullian, we say, they be the interpretation of the law; and with Eusebius, we call them the Word of God." And page 260, of the *Confession of Augsburg*—"But whenas they teach or determine anything contrary to the Gospel, then have the Churches a commandment of God which forbiddeth obedience to them. Mat., vii., 'beware of false prophets.' 'And if an angel from heaven should preach any other Gospel,' Gal. i." And Mr. Durham says, *Revel.*,\* page 62, that Messrs. Cotton, Norton, and Hooker, acknowledge that casting out of a Church is but to proceed upon clear scandals of a gross nature, convincingly made out, and not otherwise. How then, *a fortiori*, may an argument be formed in his defence, in not subjecting to such a sentence, where none of the above-mentioned things can be made the grounds of the sentence! And what an argument is it against them who proceeded without such clear and manifest grounds! And how they will answer it, I know not.

If any should say that this is not applicable to his case, because this casting out was from all Church privileges: answer, it is the same with him *qua* minister, though with respect to the unjustness of the grounds, it amounts to no more than what it did to the poor man that was casten out of the synagogue, whom Christ did receive. And Turretine, Vol. III., page 324, *De Potestate Ecclesiasticâ* says—"Albeit that pastors have not a nomothetic power properly so called, or a power of making laws that can bind the conscience; nevertheless, they have a power

\* *A Commentary upon the Book of Revelation.* Amsterdam, 1660; London, 1680.—*Ed.*

of making Canons and Ecclesiastical Constitutions, for better order and decency. Which Constitutions, albeit they are to be observed for the conservation of good order, nevertheless they bind not but upon the account of scandal and contumacy." And does not our Confession of Faith say, chap. 31, par. 3, that "The decrees and determinations of Synods and Councils, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission."\* So that it is clear that the Word is always the judge. And if it were not so, our faith should stand in the wisdom of man, contrar 1 Cor., ii. 5. And not only so, but man should have dominion over our faith, opposite to 2 Cor., i. 24. Hence, the Confession says, in the same fore-cited place, that "Synods or Councils are not to be made the rule of faith or practice." And if it were not so, how could we obey that precept, 1. Thess., v. 21—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good;" or yet follow the practice of the Bereans, Acts, xiv. 11, who were commended for their searching the Scriptures daily, "whether these things were so?" And if the Bereans might do so, and [be] commended for it, after they had heard a Paul preach, how much more warrantably may we do it after the Act of a Presbytery, or yet of a General Assembly! So, they which either teach the doctrine, or such as embrace it, to wit, to believe because the Church has said or done it—they are in a dangerous case. And if there were any pastor that should say, "because the Church hath ratified such a sentence, therefore it is to be obeyed," such ought not to be a minister out of Rome; for it is *their* doctrine. And it is to be feared that many hearers hath drunk in not a little of this poison, that because the Church hath done it, therefore it is enough!

\* Macmillan, however, does not finish his quotation. The Confession adds—"Not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his Word."—Ed.



Though I be not to degrade from the Church that reverence that is due unto her, or yet to have her just decrees slighted or misregarded, yet I would have all persons follow the Bereans' practice. And none that is orthodox in the faith will win beyond this.

And have we not had precedents in the Church of Scotland that unjust sentences are not to be obeyed? whereof several instances might be given. And what is more confirmatory of this, than what is said in the nullity of the pretended Assembly at St. Andrews and Dundee, page 5, where they say (this was in the year 1651)\*—"We protest, that whatsoever Acts, Ratifications, Declarations, Sentences, Censures or Commissions, that shall be made or given out by them, be null and void," etc. So now, *quod convenit multis, convenit uni eodem genere et specie*. And is there not so much declared by this Church, Ass. 1690, that unjust sentences was not binding where, Act 13, they declare all sentences past against any ministers by any Church judicatory upon the account of the differences among Presbyterians from the year 1650 till the re-introduction of Prelacy, to be of themselves void and null? Now, when it is declared by an Assembly that a deposition, though passed by an Assembly (as their Act will bear), is void and null of itself when passed upon the account of differences; how then can the Presbytery stand upon the head of their unjust sentence, when upon the same account and top† with their own Acts? This is most unaccountable. And the judgment of the Assembly in this is most evident, that in matters that are controverted no such sentence is valid in itself. And that sentence, which is so, is never binding. And the Assembly declaring it to be so will never make it otherwise, to wit, to have been binding. Now, consider what is said.

\* The quotation is from the *Protestation* made by the Anti-Resolutioners, whose leader was James Guthrie of Stirling, executed June 1, 1661.—ED.

† Query—*topic*?—ED.



What way will they defend themselves that say a sentence, though unjust, should be obeyed? If the thing be considered *qua tale*, as really unjust, and striking at the overturning of a direct precept, by setting such a block in the way as that of an unjust sentence, to the hindering of the person from giving obedience to such a command (as by office he is required to do), as that of a minister's being "instant in season and out of season" (all physical and moral impediments removed) in this case, I cannot see how such sentences, either of suspension or yet of deposition, should be obeyed. And albeit the spirit of the prophets is to be subject to the prophets, it is always in things lawful, and in the Lord; otherwise, the subjection should be illimited. And so the fifth Command is to be understood, with respect to the subjection that is due to superiors by inferiors, that it is in things lawful, and "in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 1).

In the next place, I inquire whether, or not, may not the case happen, that a Church should turn very corrupt, both as to doctrine and worship, and some one or other, for testifying against this, should be suspended, yea deposed, as in the case of Athanasius? Should, therefore, the publication of the purity of the doctrine and worship be penned up by an unjust sentence? And if, in this case, obedience should be given thereto, might not God justly plead with such as a keeper-back of his counsel, and punish them with the same blindness that others are in, *because he set not the light on a candlestick, but put it under a bushel*? Secondly, whether, or not, he that preaches, after an unjust sentence, can be rightly charged with contumacy, more than a child refusing obedience to a parent, in an unlawful command, can be charged with disobedience? And if, till once the matter be examined and tried by the Superior Judicatory, that they can ratify what the inferior has done: whether, or not, they are more chargeable of disorder, who passes their sentence after an appeal, and not suffering the superior judicatory to make

the decision who is right and who is wrong? And if the superior judicatory partake of this disorder, who (as was said) ratifies the sentence before they hear what the sentenced has to say for his own vindication; whether, or not, such things considered, are the judicatories more guilty of disorder, than he that continues in the exercise of this ministerial office as formerly, after the sentence is passed?

But now, as to those who hold, that an unjust sentence should be obeyed, because of order; to this I say, that if a controversy or debate should fall in between a judicatory and a member thereof, and if the member think himself cruelly dealt with, so that the laws in their severity are overstretched; and he appeal to a superior,—the judicatory ought also to sist their process, and likewise appeal, or at least wait till he follow out his, who has appealed. And here, no sentence passes, and order is kept up. But this cannot be in the case of a superior judicatory. Therefore, if *they* should pass a sentence unjustly (for only of such sentences we always speak, for there is none that ought to debate against subjection to a just sentence)—the person has no other refuge, but to follow his duty as formerly; as also, if he has expected redress, but could not attain it; for so it may happen. Secondly, if the judicatory have passed their sentence rashly and unjustly, they ought speedily to retract, and thereby also order is kept. For unjust sentences are no order, but disorder, and a subjection herein is a subjection to men's disorders. And yet, in this case, I cannot see how they can be charged with opening a door to anarchy and confusion, who disobey an unjust sentence, more than a child or servant that disobeys the unlawful command of parent and master. For, suppose a parent or master should discharge their child or servant from worshipping of God duly and orderly, are they to forbear their duty till they get redress from the judge? or is there no way for them to know whether the command be just or not, or whether they

will be guilty of disorder or not, if they shall disobey? For, if the child or servant disobey, then it may be said they make themselves the judge. And not only so, but there is such disorder here, that the child and servant turn umpire, and abandon their former relation. And both of them are as strictly tied to subjection, as a member is to the judicatory whereof he is a member. Yet in the case, I see not that either child or servant needs wait the determination of the judge, because the Word of God decides the matter clearly. And if it were not so in matters of duty, then it would be the same with the Church of Rome, to believe as they believe. Or will any say, that child or servant are herein guilty of disorder? And if they will, they roll the blame upon God, as the author of this disorder, who hath commanded it to be so, viz., to prefer the commands of God before the commands of men; and it should be so.

But, lest I should be mistaken, I confine not within the limits of this unjust sentence such sentences as may be passed, even *clave errante*, that is, though the scandals are not judicially proven, so that the person cannot be legally condemned; yet there is such a *fama clamosa* of a minister, either as to his doctrine of being unsound in the faith, and broaching some new error, either as to doctrine, worship, etc., in the House of God, or yet of a scandalous practice and carriage, which things can scarcely fall out but they may be proven; and if that judicature should pass their sentence without clear probation, which is *clave errante* in them, and so evil;—yet if the minister be such as seeks the glory of God and the welfare of souls, and being conscious to himself how much hurt such a scandal may do in the Church of God, though innocent, that it is safer to subject and wait the superior judicatory's determination, and that though unjustly wronged. Yea, though the superior judicatory should ratify it, he should subject upon the grounds above said, if he cannot, to the conviction of impartial persons, get himself

clearly vindicated. And this way he understands the subjection that is to be given to an unjust sentence, in that Paper at the Commission, and not otherwise. And as it condemned his own practice in preaching after the sentence passed, he was weak in saying so, because he cannot be charged with those things as above said. So that such sentences, as pass on a minister to whom none of the forementioned things are applicable, as they are void and null of themselves, so no subjection due to them. And of such sort he reckons those which may pass upon a minister for following of his duty. And although it should not be granted, that it is for following his duty he is sentenced; yet when no other thing is alleged, it is evident. And all that any can say in opposition to this is, only till redress be had from superior judicatories. For I believe none will say that when redress is sought and not obtained, that in this case an unjust sentence shall be obeyed. Because this were to make the power that judicatories have absolute indeed. Therefore, those who upon this pretence opened their mouths upon him before cannot but shut them now, when redress has been sought for but not had. And all they have to charge him with is disorder, according to the Commission's Act, 1704. And to exculpate himself of this he charges all that hold him guilty of disorder to accuse him in preaching and practising anything that has not been already attained and practised in the Church of Scotland, and that in her best reformed settled times. And if they shall call this disorder, let them answer what is said, Deut. iv. 9-10—"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart, all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons." And 2 John, 8—"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought."

In the last place, because he is rendered so odious in the

bounds, as he is informed, and that by both ministers and others, for what he did at the Commission ; by ministers, I say, because, as he hears, they asperse him with that of disowning what formerly he owned:—therefore, it is needful that something be said here, also that persons may see they have not so much ground to accuse him as they say. Though if they have any, they have too much, which he is heartily sorry for. But that he declared what formerly he owned, and reckoned it a great sin, is a downright and manifest untruth. And he charges those who spread this, and knew the truth of the matter, to hold up their face, and say, “Lord, thou knowest I speak nothing but truth, when I said, he acknowledged it as his sin in doing what he has done !” And it is known what litigation there was about that word *sin*. And he, seeking after peace, was willing to take with it as a fault and a wrong step of procedure, that he said he would not see the Presbytery for some days, while he had not then formally laid down reasons (which you will find more clear in the first four articles), as also, his declining before a sentence, though he had told his reasons therefor to the Committee, which are set down in the tenth premiss. And likewise, it was told concerning that expression of “every other thing,”\* that in a complex matter, as there might be some things bad, so likewise some things good ; and that in open judgment, when that Paper was given in and subscribed. Yea, he is so far from disowning what he owned (though maliciously aspersed), that, as he looked upon the “Grievances” as just, so through affiance of the Divine Spirit, [he is resolved] to adhere thereto, and that upon all hazards. As for the justice he met with, he leaves that to a farther judgment, and so passes it without any other reflection. And for what subjection he then promised judicatories in

\* “Any other thing in my way that hath given offence,”—see *Hutchison*, p. 145. The reference is to the paper subscribed by Macmillan at the Commission in July, 1704.—*Ed.*

the Lord, the obligation is nowise binding, because he is not put in a capacity to perform his office, the cause and ground of the obligation. For how can he, as to his office, be accountable to the judicatory for the exercise thereof, when he is not by them allowed to exercise the same? For, as the obligation came under the consideration of his being reponed to the office; so the judicatory's not reponing makes void the obligation, that it is nowise binding upon him. And none will oppose this, but such as are *priest-ridden*, who will say anything. It is a good saying, which divines have, that an obligation *de rebus impossibilibus*, as well as *illicitis*, *non obligat jurantem ad sui observationem*; *et quum auferatur ratio formalis juramenti, juramentum cessat ratione eventus*.<sup>\*</sup> And this holds; for *tollitur causa, tollitur effectus*. But this being so clear in itself, it is needless to demonstrate it further.

But then, a few words as to that, that his defences could not be heard by the superior judicatory, because they were not given in before a sentence passed; and then I have done.

Then, as to this, *first*, if it be minded what is said in the fifth premiss, or yet of that judge, for the Lord: this argument will have little or no weight, and especially amongst those where justice is regarded, because readily such will look more to the materiality of the cause than the formality of the procedure. *Secondly*, grant there had been an omission here, yet is that a sufficient ground to deny a man a hearing in his own defence, when the matter is referred to a superior judicatory? And whether or not, if he who in a law plea should take advantage of his neighbour because of such an informal step, and thereby should wrest from him his goods, and cheat him out of his

\* "An obligation regarding things impossible, as well as unlawful, binds not the person engaging, to observe the same; and as soon as the condition of the engagement is taken away, the engagement itself lapses by circumstances."—*Ed.*



estate—could he not but be reckoned a breaker of the tenth command, and called covetous? I cannot see but he might. And sure he followed not with the general rule herein, to do to others as he would have them do to him. Such advantages in law, quirks in matters of weight, I judge is not fair play. And if any may use them, they should be left to lawyers who judge for reward, etc., not to ecclesiastic persons who ought to be no such judges. But *thirdly*, if an error in the formality spoils the cause that it cannot have a hearing, then there would be no necessity for superior judicatories to address to, that the matter may be righted. For there is not a party, but they will strive to give their own cause the best representation that they can; and if superior judicatories may not dive into this, they may be reckoned cyphers. May not persons, if they please, pretend one informal step or another, or something else against their opposite, for bettering their own cause, and hereby the wronged and oppressed should never get a hearing? What sort of justice must this be, to proceed from a superior ecclesiastic judicatory? Felix, an heathen, would give more justice, who could tell a Paul that he could not be heard till his accusers were present, and both of them face to face. And says not the Wise Man, Prov., xviii. 17, that “He that is first on his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him out?” And how is this, but by the judge? Much more as to this might be said; but I forbear, because any unbiassed person will never reckon it a valid ground to have denied him a hearing, under the consideration of such a supposed informal step.

So, judging by this time, the reader may be satisfied with what is said, though much more might have been said; yet, since there is a deduction of the whole (though briefly) and true matter of fact, *a capite ad calcem*, from the beginning to the end, I shall satisfy myself therewith, and so do thou.

And if there be any to object against the truth of what is



said, he is ready, upon fair and timeous warning, to answer them. And (passing all reflections of reponing some Episcopalians to their former charge, though deposed by a Synod for Arminian tenets) since he has shewn himself so far against acting singularly or loving to do so ; and that, by waiting redress, and shewing his willingness to have peace with truth kissing each other, and to concur to his power for getting these things redressed that are grievous and offensive :—But since nothing in this can be obtained without such stretches as conscience will not allow, as an acknowledgment he suffers justly, and so [was] sentenced justly, and with all the “Grievances” laid aside, and grievous to be spoken of ; therefore, he resolves, in the strength of the Lord, to preach the Gospel as formerly, and to take and accept invitation for that end where he may have it,\* lest he should bring himself under that woe the apostle speaks of, *Woe to me if I preach not the Gospel!*—nothing hindering.

\* On 5th April, 1704, a letter was read from Macmillan, at the General Meeting of the United Societies, desiring a conference. It is clear that he had decided, as he says above, to “take and accept” a call from them. This was given on October 24, 1706.—*Ed.*

## II.

A true double of a Paper of Grievances given in to the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, July 6th, 1703, by Mr. John Reid, minister of Carsphairn; Mr. William Tod, minister of Buittle; and Mr. John Macmillan, minister of Balma-ghie: To which generally the whole fore-mentioned parishes adhere, and the greatest part of the Godly in the land. [Appended to the *True Narrative*, 1704.]

1. It is a great grievance, that none of our Assemblies hath, by an Act in solemn and ample form, and in name of this National Church, asserted and declared Presbyterian Government to be of divine right, unto which the Church has adhered and given testimony by suffering; and that the late Prelacy was a most wicked usurpation, and grievous encroachment upon the rights of the said Church. The necessity of such an Act is evident, in regard the late Prelacy was never ecelesiastically asserted, but only depended on the civil sanction. And now, for the Church to remain so long silent in asserting her own right, after she had been deprived of the exercise of Presbytery about thirty years, doth manifestly imply a holding of it by the same tenure, viz., *Erastian Supremacy*. Especially, considering the Act of Re-establishment goes as far back as the year 1592, there is cut off what the Church had attained unto in her purest time, viz., 1638-1649 inclusive.

2. The intrinsic power of the Church (which is now become a case of confession) with relation to the calling, adjourning, and dissolving of her judicatories, and the freedom of treating

ecclesiastical matters therein, has not been asserted by an Act in any of our Assemblies these thirteen years bygone, with relation to the Church's claim and power. This importeth a submission to all the encroachments made by the civil powers upon the Church, by constant calling, adjourning, and dissolving Assemblies, and prelimiting the same, both as to matters and members; besides, the not asserting the Government in opposition to Erastianism in compliance with the State (while, in the meantime, they have been and are wreathing an Erastian yoke about our necks) does not only clearly imply a leaving of the power in their hands, but a manifest disowning all the former wrestlings of this Church for her rights and liberties in such like cases, forasmuch as we, Issachar-like, crouch under the burden. And that which is most unaccountable and dolorous, an Address was sent to K. W. \* by a considerable meeting of ministers in name of this Church, wherein that commendable and honourable appearance for the Prince of the Kings of the earth, by asserting the Church's rights at the dissolution of the Assembly, to which the Earl of Lothian was Commissioner, is disowned. And yet the authors have not been called to an account and censured by any subsequent Assembly. We cannot but look upon this, as in so far allowed by the whole.

3. The Church has taken into ministerial communion many Curates, upon their taking the Oath of Allegiance and subscribing the Assurance, the new ministerial qualifications, without requiring so much as the shadow of repentance for their former horrible scandals; whereby they declare to the world, that they judge all the perjuries, persecutions, and other abominations (whereof they are guilty) to be no scandal, and thus condemn our former contendings against these false teachers, and the state of our late sufferings from the beginning. Yea, it is to

\* King William.—ED.

be feared, to make perjuries shall be found the terms of their admission ; the formula, which they are required to subscribe, being in several things expressly contrair to the Test and Covenant Oath. We have that charity for those who consented to the taking in of the Curates, as to judge that, although what is said be evidently *finis operis*, yet not *finis operantis*.\*

4. Ministers guilty of accepting K. C. Indulgences and K. J. Toleration,† have never been required, by any judicatory of this Church, to acknowledge the evils of these, and all their other backslidings. Nay, nor hath it been so much as proposed, for anything ever we heard. We humbly judge the whole Church culpable in this head.

5. In all our national and public Fasts, the sins of the land are not fully enumerated, particularly the ignominious maltreatment of the Covenants by burning them ; the sinfulness of the Act of Parliament called the *Act Rescissory* ; the Acts against the Covenants unrepealed, nay, not so much as desired to be rescinded, which is a grievous sin both in Church and State ; the sin of intelligencers and informers against honest people, when flying for their lives ; the assisting of enemies by riding with them, and admission of lax tested elders, together with the Declaration and self-contradictory Test, etc. ; all other oaths and bonds in the late unhappy times ; the Council's appointing diets of national fasts, which is destructive of the Church's rights and contrary to our former practice.

6. Ministers not preaching so freely and faithfully against the sins of the time, as the Word of God, Acts of the General Assemblies, and the good imitable example of our forefathers warrants them. Particularly, they give not public testimony against the discountenancing good men, and the advancing of

\* This obscure passage may mean that the admission of the Curates was a measure of worldly policy.—ED.

† King Charles—King James.—ED.

flagitious malignant persons to places of most eminent trust. Their pusillanimous mentioning of the Covenants at baptism, some omitting them altogether.

7. As to the way and manner of discipline, its exercise in many places too lax and partial, some scandalous persons entirely overlooked, others easily passed for pecuniary mulcts after the fashion and practice of many curates in the late times. The neglect of censuring him or them, who informed K. W. what Presbyteries were for asserting the intrinsic power of the Church, in the year 1701. And ministers unsafe admitting scandalous persons to the Lord's Table, contrary to Acts of Assembly thereanent.

8. The generality of ministers taking the Oath of Allegiance and subscribing the Assurance and qualifications, without which no man can be received or continued a minister or preacher in this Church, as is clear from the Act of Parliament entitled, *Act for settling the peace and quiet of the Church*.

9. The last Commission, their reponing three curates, notwithstanding of the sentence passed against them by their respective Synods, and that because of their being Arminianly principled and otherwise scandalous in their life.

10. The Moderator and Clerk, their tergiversing upon the dissolution of the last Assembly by the Commissioner, a thing bewailed by many, and no due regard had to the protestations then verbally made by some, and adhered to by others. That, when it was moved by several members of the Commission that a true and faithful narrative of the Assembly's dissolution, and the verbal protest adhered unto, should be made by the said Commission, it was so far from being hearkened unto that it was wholly laid aside.

11. Q. A.,\* public summoning all the members of the Assembly to meet at Edinburgh, March 10, 1703, a case utterly un-

\* Queen Anne.—*Ed.*

precedented in this Church, and also, that the Assembly last failed in not remonstrating against such a proclamation, and also the Queen's Letter to the Council, and to the last Assembly, evidencing such respect to the Episcopal clergy as tends to the weakening of our right Constitution. We, humbly judge the Church very faulty in not declaring against the same.

12. The last Assembly refused to say, in their address to the Q., that the Presbyterian Government is founded upon the Word of God, although it was often pressed ; which is very grievous and offensive, especially seeing Presbytery was settled, by the Claim of Right, as only "agreeable to the inclinations of the people : " as if our forefathers had only suffered for a thing merely suiting their own temper and humour.

[The following note is added at the close of the little volume containing the " True Narrative " and the " Grievances : "—]

*Having occasionally seen a " Letter to the Parishioners of [Balmaghie]," \* under the hands of some of the learned members of the Presbytery, after what is above was finished, with respect to the Presbytery's sentence : which being answered above in the examination of the Libel, I shall forbear at the time to give any further answer to it, only with this observation—that the learned man, in his paper, mistakes the question, misplaces the Scripture Matt. xviii. 16-18, imposeth an implicit faith upon people, is anti-Scriptural, anti-Presbyterian, inconsistent with himself, unjust in his relation of matters with respect to that member, is a bad disciplinarian, his paper is filled up with great untruths ; lastly, he succumbs in what he has undertaken to make good from the Word of God. All which things can be instructed from his paper, that every one may see that peruses it.*

\* There is a blank here ; but the Letter referred to was addressed to the parishioners of Balmaghie by Andrew Cameron.—Ed.

## III.

## Libel against Mr. John Macmillan, minister at Balmaghie.

[Reprinted from a pamphlet entitled—"The Pamphlet entitled A True Narrative of the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, etc., Examined and Found False . . . By a Member of that Presbytery. Edinburgh : 1705." The libel is copied *verbatim* from the Presbytery Records. This pamphlet appears to have been sold at five shillings Scots, or fivepence.]

WHEREAS the calumniating or misrepresenting the Church, and ministry thereof, to people, especially when done publicly out of the pulpit; and the breach of ministers' engagements at their ordination, and the like, after engagements and declarations by word and write, in being disorderly, disobedient, and contumacious to the commands or appointments of the judicatories of the Church, to which ministers are subject and engage to be subject; and the turning divisive or schismatic, and endeavouring to lead or seduce others thereto: are things sinful, hurtful to the Church, and offensive, and which therefore ought to be censured according to justice and equity: Yet it is of verity, that the said Mr. John Macmillan is guilty of these evils, in the instances following:—

1. The said Mr. John Macmillan did declare, that he would withdraw from the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, whereof he is a member, for three or four Presbytery days, or longer, upon the eleventh day of May last, and did, at that time, refuse to give reasons for his so doing, albeit he was required to give them, and did withdraw accordingly.

2. Thereafter, he being sent for by the said Presbytery the same day, did come to them. And the Moderator again desiring him to give the grounds of his withdrawing from them, he did



answer, that he withdrew not from the said Presbytery only, but from the whole National Church of Scotland as now established. And so did libel the whole National Church, as giving ground to separate from them, or declared himself an unreasonable and wilful schismatic.

3. He declared, he knew not whether this Church was Presbyterial or Episcopal, in regard the General Assembly had not, by their explicit Act, declared it to be Presbyterial; as if a Presbyterial Church could not be known to be such, except by their explicit declarative Act thereanent.

4. He did refuse to confer further with the said Presbytery, and to attend their diets, though the Moderator, in name of the Presbytery, required him so to do, and did withdraw himself immediately from them; and so, with his separation, did act disobediently and contumaciously to the Presbytery, contrary to his solemn engagements at his ordination. All which are instructed by the Records of the said Presbytery held the eleventh of May, 1703.

5. He did say, on the ——— Sabbath of May last, in his preaching to the congregation at Balmaghie, that the Church of Scotland had gone off the foundation; and did acknowledge to the Presbytery the third of November last, that he spake these words; but alleged, that he spake them thus, viz.: that the Church had gone off the foundation, going back to the year 1592. As if the King and Parliament, by their Act legally establishing the Government of the Church (excepting patronages) as it was established in the year 1592, gave him ground to teach the people, that the Church of Scotland had gone off the foundation. And so, he did give people ground, by that phrase, to think that the Church was become erroneous or heretical, in not abiding by the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, or of going off from Christ the foundation, and that this Church was not upon the right foundation in the year 1592.

6. He did not keep the Synodical Fast in May last, nor read the causes thereof to the congregation at Balmaghie. He did absent from some Presbyteries after May last, and did absent from the Synods in April and October last, and did give to the Presbytery in November last, as his reason why he went not to the last Synod, his being gravelled by some hard expressions (as he called them) of some ministers in the bounds, in some of their public sermons, which were indeed against separatists and their principles. In which things, he hath acted disobediently to the Synod and Presbytery, where he hath been a member, and disorderly, and hath owned himself reached and gravelled with what is preached against separatists, and hath broken his ordination engagements. This is to be proven by the Records of the Synod and Presbytery, and people of Balmaghie.

7. Mr. John Macmillan did declare to a Committee of the said Presbytery of Kirkcudbright at Balmaghie the eighth of December, 1703, that he was not purposed to be at the Presbytery at the Kells the day immediately preceding, because he finds not that satisfaction from the Presbytery's Answers\* to the paper of Grievances given in by him that he expected, and that the Reply to the Answers will shew wherein the dissatisfaction lies, when it comes forth; whereby he testifies himself to be resolute in separating from the Presbytery, and that contrary to what he declared under his hand in his Protestation given in to the Presbytery at Polsack,† August 30, 1703, and to what he declared to the Presbytery at Kirkcudbright, November 3, 1703; and that he expects a paper to come out which will contain reasons or grounds that will warrant him to separate from the Presbytery. This article will be instructed by the Records of the Presbytery and Committee.

\* These Answers were also printed in pamphlet form in 1705, price 2d.—*Ed.*

† *Polsack*, a house, now disappeared, near Laurieston in Balmaghie.—*Ed.*

8. The said Mr. Macmillan did acknowledge to the said Committee that he declared to the congregation at Balmaghie, the first Lord's day of November last, that it was well known that, in time bypast, there had been a difference betwixt some and the Presbytery, and there was expected some sort of agreement; but, for anything he could see, there is no such agreement like to be; and that he spake of "clubbing" with the Presbytery, by which he contradicts his agreement with the Presbytery on the Wednesday immediately preceding the said Sabbath, as the Records of the Presbytery will prove, and his own acknowledgment of the said agreement on the Friday thereafter, to some persons of his own parish, mentioned in the Records of the said Committee; whereby also he evidences levity and unconstancy unbecoming a minister of the Gospel, and disrespect to the Presbytery and Agreement with them, in calling his Agreement with them "some sort of agreement" and a "clubbing."

9. He said to the congregation at Balmaghie, the said first Sabbath of November last, that there were once three that stood for the truth, but now he knew not but there was but one; and that, though they should all leave him, he resolved to stand where he was. This article to be proven by the people of Balmaghie, who were his hearers that day, and the Committee's Records, to whom he acknowledged the same in part. By this article, he accuses the Presbytery, Ministry, and People of this Church, of not standing for the truth, and declares his own resoluteness and stiffness in his separating course from this Church, and breach of agreement with the Presbytery.

10. He did say to the congregation, the said day, that he laid his account to be persecuted by the ministry for these things. This to be proven by the elders and people of Balmaghie who heard him that day, by which he justifies himself in his separation and expressions above mentioned, against this Church and

Presbytery, and his breach of his solemn engagements at his ordination, and agreements with the Presbytery, and stigmatizes the Ministry as persecutors.

11. He desired the people of Balmaghie, on the Lord's Day the twenty-first of November last, to stick by him ; and if they would not, he would stand to his hazard. To be proven by Adam Glenholm, servant to Garvarie,\* and the people of Balmaghie who heard him that day. By which he evidences himself to be making a faction or party in the Church, to concur with and support him in separation.

12. He did declare to some of his parishioners, on Friday the fifth of November last, that the Presbytery and he were agreed ; and when he was desired to tell why he declared himself so far against the said Agreement on the Sabbath thereafter, he answered that, when he went to his studies the said Friday at even, they did not go with him, and that he had not freedom in prayer, and therefore he spake so on the Sabbath thereafter anent the said Agreement. This to be proven by George Mackguffog in Drumlane, an elder of the parish, and ——. In this he seems to be enthusiastic, † or to reason loosely and inconsiderately.

13. When the said Committee did interrogate the said Mr. Macmillan (1), if he would adhere to the Agreement at Kirkcudbright, the third of November last, according to the Presbytery's minutes? he answered that he could not give answer that night whether he would or not. (2), If he would abide by these things which he acknowledged that night, he spake in public, that are contrary to the Agreement or not? he answered that he was not ripe to tell his judgment of that yet. (3), If he would engage, and give it under his hand, thereafter to exercise his ministry orderly, according to Presbyterian principles,

\* *Garvarie*, may be Darngarroch.      † *i.e.*, under a delusion.—*Ed.*

be subject to the Presbytery and other judicatories? he answered that he would give in no answer to this that night. These are proven by the Records of the said Committee. And by which answers he declines and shifts\* to declare himself to the Presbytery and their Committee, so as he is obliged by Presbyterian principles, his solemn engagements at his ordination, his subscription in his Protest and Declarations, and Agreement recorded in the Presbytery's Records; and without declaring himself satisfyingly as to which, and engaging as to these, he cannot be suffered to teach publicly, and act as a minister of this Church.

For all which things libelled, the said Mr. John Macmillan ought to be sentenced and censured by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, within whose jurisdiction he exercises his ministry, and hath offended as above; according to the Word of God, Acts of the General Assemblies of this Church, and laudable practice of the discipline thereof in such cases.

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#### IV.

The Protestation, Declinature, and Appeal of Mr. John Macmillan, minister of the Gospel at Balmaghie, and Mr. John Macneil, Probationer and Preacher of the Gospel, sent to the Commission of the Kirk at Edinburgh, the 29th of September, 1708.

\* Evades.—*Ed.*

[Reprinted from a tract of 8 pages, probably issued in 1708, with the note —“Inclosed in a line to *Nicol Spence*, and by him delivered to the Commission, September 29, 1708.”

Nicol Spence was “Sub-Clerk” of the General Assembly. The Commission responded to this Appeal by an Act dated October 1, 1708, voiding Macneil’s license to preach, and threatening both him and Macmillan with the highest Church censures, if they continued their “gross and sinful practices.” The Appeal was Macmillan’s response to a citation to appear before the Commission.]

WE, Mr. John Macmillan, present minister of the Gospel at Balmaghie, and Mr. John Macneil, Preacher of the Gospel, being most odiously and invidiously represented to the world as schismatics, separatists, and teachers of unsound and divisive doctrine tending to the detriment of Church and State, and especially by ministers with whom we were embodied, while there remained any hope of getting grievances redressed :

Therefore, that both ministers and professors \* may know the unaccountableness of such aspersions, let it be considered that this backsliding Church (when we, with others, might have been big with expectations of advancement in Reformation) continued in their defections from time to time, still, as occasion was given, evidencing their readiness to comply with every new backsliding course, instance that of the Oath of Allegiance and Bond of Assurance to the present Queen : which additional step to the former gave occasion to our unhappy contentions and divisions :

And now at this time, for the glory of God, the vindication of truth and of ourselves (as conscience and reason obligeth us), to make evident to the world the groundlessness of these aspersions and calumnies as renters† and dividers, and particularly in the Commission’s late odious and malicious libel, wherein are contained many gross falsehoods, such as “swearing persons not

\* *i.e.*, of religion.—*Ed.*

† Renders.—*Ed.*



to pay cess," and "travelling through the country with scandalous persons in arms," which, as they are odious calumnies in themselves, so they will never be proven by witnesses :

And as to our judgment anent the cess, we reckon it duty in the people of God to deny and withhold all support, succour, aid, or assistance, that may contribute to the upholding or strengthening the Man of Sin, or any of the adversaries of truth (as the Word of God instructs us), or for supporting any in such a way, as tending to the establishment of the kingdom of Satan, and bringing down the kingdom of the Son of God. In a course tending this way, how deeply these nations are engaged (contrary to the Word of God, and our indispensable oaths and covenants, whereby these lands were solemnly devoted to God) is too palpable and plain, especially in the sinful terms of the late God-provoking, religion-destroying, and land-ruining Union. We judge it most necessary to give to the world a brief and short account of our principles in what we own or disown, referring for larger and more ample information, to several protestations and testimonies given by some of the godly heretofore at different times and places. And hereby, that truth may be vindicated and our conscience exonerated,—

We declare to the world our hearty desire to embrace and adhere to the written Word of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the only and competent rule and adequate umpire of faith and manners, and whatever is founded thereupon and agreeable thereunto, such as our Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directory for Worship, Covenants National and Solemn League, the Acknowledgments of Sin and Engagements to Duties, Causes of God's Wrath, and the ordinary and perpetual officers of Christ's appointment, such as Pastors, Doctors, Elders, and Deacons, and the Form of Church Government commonly called Presbyterian.



Next, we declare our firm adherence to all the faithful contendings for truth, whether of old or of late, by ministers and professors, and against whatever sinful courses, whether more refined or more gross ; and particularly, the public Resolutions, Cromwell's usurpation, the toleration of sectaries and heresies in his time, and against the sacrilegious usurpation and tyranny of Charles II., the unfaithfulness of ministers and professors in employing with him, and accepting his Indulgence first and last ; and in a word, to everything agreeable to the matter of this our testimony, as it is declared in page 25 and 26 of the Informatory Vindication, printed *anno* 1687.

Likewise, we declare our adherence unto the testimony against the abominable Toleration granted by the Duke of York, given in to the ministers at Edinburgh by that faithful minister and now glorified martyr, Mr. James Renwick, January 17, 1688 ; and to whatever wrestlings or contendings have been made, or testimonies given, against the endeavours of any, in their subtle and sedulous striving, to insinuate and engage us in a sinful confederacy with a malignant interest and cause, against the Word of God, our Solemn League and Covenant, and testimony of this Church.

Next, we bear testimony against persons being invested with royal power and authority in these covenanted lands, without a declaration of their hearty compliance with and approbation of the National Solemn League and Covenants, and engagement to prosecute the ends thereof, by consenting to and ratifying all Acts and Laws made in defence of these Covenants, agreeable to the Word of God, and laudable Acts and practice of this kirk in our best times.

Moreover, we bear testimony against all confederation and association with Popish prelates and malignants, contrary to the Word of God and our solemn engagements : the magistrates' adjourning and dissolving of Assemblies, and not allowing them

time to consider and expedite their affairs : their appointing them diets and courses of fasts, particularly that of January 14, and the Thanksgiving August 26, *anno* 1708, which is a manifest encroachment on, and destructive to, the privileges of this Church : their protecting of Curates in the peaceable exercise of their ministry, some in kirks, others in meeting-houses ;\* yea, even in the principal city of the kingdom, if qualified by swearing the Oath of Allegiance : their not bringing unto condign punishment enemies to the Covenant, and cause of God, but advancing such to places of power and trust. All which we here bear testimony against.

Next, we bear testimony against lukewarmness and unfaithfulness in ministers anent the corruptions and defections the Church was guilty of in the late times, not yet purged and removed by censures and otherwise, as was duty ; and their not leaving faithful and joint testimonies against all the encroachments made upon the Church, by the civil powers, since the year 1690. And we bear testimony against the settling the Constitution of this Church, according as it was established in the year 1592. And the ministers' not testifying against this deed seems to import a disowning of all that Reformation attained to betwixt 1638 and 1649 inclusive : at least, cowardice in not daring to avouch the same, or their being ashamed to own it, because many famous and faithful Acts of Assemblies, especially about the year 1648, would have made them liable to censure, even to the length of silencing and deposition, for their defection and unfaithfulness during the late times of the land's apostacy—particularly, their weakening the hands and discouraging the hearts of the Lord's suffering people, by their bitter expressions, and aspersions cast on them for their zeal and tenderness, which would not allow

\* "*Some in kirks*"—this refers to the fact that many Episcopal ministers still held manse and church at this date. Cunningham (I. 196) says 165 such were known at the Union.—*Ed.*

them to comply with wicked, arbitrary, and bloody counsel, as many of *them* did : their not renewing the Covenant, buried for upwards of fifty years by the greatest part of the land, contrar to the former practice of this Church, especially after some grosser steps of defection : their receiving of perjured Curates into ministerial communion without Covenant ties and obligations, and evident signs of their repentance, contrar to the former practice of this Church : their receiving some lax tested men and Curates' elders, into Kirk offices, without some apparent signs, at least, of their repentance in a public appearance, contrar to the former practice of this Church in such like cases, evident by the Acts of the Assemblies : their not protesting formally, faithfully, and explicitly against the Magistrates' adjourning and dissolving of Assemblies, and recording the same, contrar the practice of this Church in our reforming times : (we are not concerned to notice the protestation of some few persons at particular times, seeing their precipitancy and rashness, in this matter (as they accounted it), was afterward apologized for, and that it was not the deed of the Assembly) : their not asserting, in any explicit and formal Act, the divine right of Presbytery, and the intrinsic power of the Church, though often desired by many private Christians and some several members ; their not confirming and ratifying the Acts of the Assemblies, that were made in our best times, for strengthening and advancing the work of Reformation, contrar to the former practice of this Church : their admitting, in many places, ignorant and scandalous persons to the Lord's Table, contrar to the Acts of former Assemblies : their not protesting against the present sinful confederacy with papists, malignants, and other enemies of religion and godliness, contrar the Word of God and former practice of this Church : their offensive partiality in their respective judicatories, as to some particular members, whereby the more lax and scandalous are overlooked and passed by, and

the more faithful and zealous are severely dealt with and handled, contrar the rule of equity and the former practice of this Church : their refusing and shifting \* to receive and redress the people's just and great grievances, and little regard had to prevent the giving offence to the Lord's people, and small endeavours to have these things removed that are stumbling and offensive to them, contrar to the apostle's rule and practice, who became all things to all men, that by all means he might save some : their not declaring, faithfully and freely, against the sins of the land former and latter, without respect of persons, contrar to that express precept—"Set the trumpet to thy mouth, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sin."

Lastly, we bear testimony against ministers' sinful and shameful silence, when called to speak and act, by preaching and protesting, against this unhallowed Union, which, as it is already the stain, so we fear it will prove the ruin and bane of this poor nation ; though some of them, we grant, signified their dislike thereof, before and about the time it was concluded. Yet there was no plain and express protestation, faithfully and freely given in to the Parliament, shewing the sinfulness and danger of this cursed Union, being contrar, not only to the honour, interest, and fundamental laws, and conditions of the kingdom, and a palpable surrender of the sovereignty, rights, and privileges of the nation ; but also, a manifest breach of our Solemn League and Covenant, which was made and sworn with uplifted hands to the most high God, for purging and reforming the three nations from error, heresy, superstition, and profaneness, and whatever is contrar to sound doctrine, the power of godliness, and the purity of worship, discipline, and government in the same. And so it involves this nation into a most fearful perjury before God, being contrar to the first article of the Covenant, wherein we swear to contribute with our utmost endeavours, in our several

\* Evading.—*Ed.*

places and callings, to reform England in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government. But by this Union, we are bound up for ever from all endeavours and attempts of this nature, and have put ourselves out of all capacity to give any help or assistance that way : as ye may see more fully in the late Protestation against the Union, published at Sanquhar, October 22, 1707.

Let none say, that what we have done here flows from ambition to exalt ourselves above others, for, as we have great cause, so we desire grace from the Lord, to be sensible of what accession\* we have with others in the land, to the provoking of his Spirit, in not walking as becomes the Gospel, according to our solemn engagements. Neither proceeds it from irritation, or inclination (by choice or pleasure), to discover our Mother's nakedness or wickedness, or that we love to be of a contentious spirit. For our witness is in heaven (whatever the world may say), that it would be the joy of our hearts, and as it were a resurrection from the dead, to have these grievances redressed and removed, and our backsliding and breaches quickly and happily healed. But it is to exoner consciences, by protesting against the defections of the land, especially of ministers. And seeing we can, neither with safety to our persons, nor freedom in our consciences, compare before their judicatories, while these defections are not acknowledged and removed, so we must so long decline them, and hereby do decline them, as unfaithful judges in such matters: in regard they have, in so great a measure, yielded up the privileges of the Church into the hands and will of her enemies, and carried on a course of defection contrar to the Scriptures, our Covenants, and the Acts and Constitutions of this our Church.

And hereby we further protest and testify, against whatever they may conclude or determine in their ecclesiastic courts, by Acts, Ratifications, Sentences, Censures, etc., that have been, or

\* Complicity.—*Ed.*

shall be, made or given out by them, and protest that the same may be made void and null, and not interpreted as binding to us, or any who desire firmly to adhere to the Covenanted Work of Reformation.

But let none look upon what we have said to be a vilipending or rejecting of the free, lawful, and rightly constitute courts of Christ. For we do acknowledge such to have been among the first most effectual means appointed of God for preserving the purity, and advancing the power, of Reformation in the Church of Christ. The sweet fruits and blessed effects whereof, this Church hath sometimes enjoyed, and which we have been endeavouring and seeking after, and are this day longing for.

We detest and abhor that principle of casting off the ministry, wherewith we are odiously and maliciously reproached, by those who labour to fasten upon us the hateful names of "schismatics, separatists, despisers of the Gospel." But herein, as they do bewray their enmity to the cause we own, so, till they bring in their own principles and practices, and ours also, and try them by the Law and Testimony, the measuring line of the sanctuary, the Word of God, and the practice of this Church, when the Lord kept house with and rejoiced over her as a bridegroom over his bride, they can never prove us schismatics or separatists from the Kirk of Scotland, upon the account of our non-union with the backslidden multitude, ministers and others.

*Finally*, that we may not be judged by any, as persons of an infallible spirit, and our actions above the cognisance of the judicatories of Christ's appointment : We appeal to the first free, faithful, and rightly constitute Assembly in this Church, to whose decision and sentence, in the things libelled against us, we willingly refer ourselves, and crave liberty to extend and enlarge this our Protestation, Declinature, and Appeal, as need requires.

JO. MACKMILLAN.

JO. MACKNEIL.

BALMAGHIE MANSE,  
SEPT. 24, 1708.

## V.

An Elegy upon the much lamented Death of that Religious and Virtuous Gentlewoman, Mrs. Mary Gordon, Daughter to the Honourable Sir Alexander Gordon of Earlstoun, and Spouse, first to Edward Goldie of Craigmue, and thereafter to the Reverend Mr. John M'Millan, Minister of the Gospel at Balmaghie; who departed this life the fifth day of May, 1723, and of her age the forty-third year. Edinburgh: 1723.

[Reprinted from Mr. Macmath's copy, once in the library of Principal Lee: a perfect and beautiful print of 16 pages, with deep mourning border. An "Acrostick" at the close is also reprinted here. Though anonymous, like all Macmillan's publications, the internal evidence leaves no room to doubt that it is his work. The resemblance is marked between this "elegy" and the epitaph in Balmaghie churchyard, both in rhythm and ideas.]

WHAT dismal sound strikes mine affrighted ears !  
 What dumpish\* looks I see ! what floods of tears !  
 Why stand such crowds of mourners all around ?  
 Why sighs and sobs from every breast resound ?  
 Why children, friends, attendants, all deplore  
 Their loss, and cry, Alas ! she breathes no more !  
 Why sinks her husband in heart-killing grief,  
 Which finds no vent, admits of no relief ?

Ah ! cease your wonder : Why ? This dismal blow  
 Gives just occasion for such mighty woe.

\* *Dumps* and *Dumpish*, now words of comedy, were at this time of serious import.—*Ed.*



Stay till the Lady's character you hear,  
 And on her hearse you'll surely drop a tear ;  
 You'll join the train of mourners, and confess  
 That all who knew her worth can do no less.

We pass her honourable, high extract,  
 From which envy itself cannot detract ;  
 For why \* untainted honour and renown  
 Has always grac'd the House of Earlstoun ;  
 Since that the humble saint ne'er sought a name  
 Built on the trophies of ancestors' fame,  
 But chose their piety to imitate,  
 Rather than worldly greatness emulate.†

In youth, her godly mother's steps she trac'd,  
 And her good counsel readily embrac'd ;  
 And hence the virgin-saint became the heir  
 Of her rich graces and endowments rare.  
 Ev'n as the potter casts the clay, with ease,  
 Into what shapes soe'er his fancy please,  
 Her pious parents formed her tender age  
 With godly precepts and with counsels sage ;  
 And as the thirsty earth drinks up the rain,  
 To yield it back with rich increase again,  
 So she imbibed with pleasing readiness,  
 And did those precepts in her life express.  
 Indulgent Nature, like a palace fair,  
 Had deck'd her body with perfections rare ;  
 The inward beauties of her mind did glance,  
 With graceful mildness, in her countenance.

Her heav'n-born soul, ev'n in her tender years,  
 Began to feel those heart-awak'ning fears  
 Of hell and wrath, those Sinai's thunder-claps,  
 Which souls in deep distress and anguish wraps,‡

\* *I.e.*, because.—*Ed.*

† Compare the epitaph.—*Ed.*

‡ The singular verb to a plural noun is characteristic of Macmillan's style.  
 —*Ed.*

And binds 'em in law-fetters, till they see  
 Their need of Christ, and His sufficiency  
 To save from sin and from deserved wrath,  
 By virtue of His meritorious death.  
 To Him she fled, He was the only port  
 To which her tosséd soul did make resort.  
 In all her straits, her conflicts, doubts, and fears,  
 She ran to Him with earnest pray'rs and tears,  
 And with a stedfast faith she did rely  
 Upon His grace and all-sufficiency.  
 Hence, ardent love to precious Christ possessed  
 The cabinet of her unspotted breast,  
 Attended with pure love to all His saints,  
 His truths, His int'rests, cause and Covenants ;  
 With prudent, peaceful, stedfast, fervent zeal,  
 For Christ, His glory, and His Church's weal.

What tongue or pen \* her graces can recite ?  
 In Christian virtues she was so complete ;—  
 Sweet-natur'd, yet not softly pliable,  
 Reserv'd, and yet discreetly affable :  
 Modest and humble, grave and temperate,  
 To poor and needy still compassionate :  
 Saving and frugal, but not covetous :  
 Could please her husband, and govern her house,  
 Yet could her heart and fittest hours reserve  
 Her God and Saviour dear to seek and serve.  
 There shone all virtues in her pious life,  
 Which grace the virgin, and adorn the wife ;  
 But true devotion always bore the sway,  
 Both in her closet and her family.

Just as the new-born babe, with earnest cries,  
 Demands the breast, which if it wants, it dies ;  
 Ev'n thus her thirsty soul long'd for the Word  
 And precious statutes of her lovely Lord.

\* Compare Rutherford's epitaph in St. Andrews, said to have been written by the well-known William Wilson of Douglas, who left Macmillan's ministry in 1743.—*Ed.*

The Holy Bible was her heart's delight,  
To read by day, to meditate by night.  
As the chaste virgin doth with joy read over  
Love-letters sent her from her dearest lover,  
Thus she the sacred Scriptures entertain'd  
As sweet love-letters from her choicest Friend—  
Whilst many of her sex do love to gaze  
On mortal beauty's little fading blaze,  
Her chaste pure eyes delighted oft to look  
Within the volume of that blesséd Book.  
This was the mirror where she us'd to spy  
Her nature's spots, and soul-deformity,  
Which drove her straight to the true Jordan's flood,  
The laver of her dear Redeemer's blood ;  
Where, bath'd by faith, her soul did fairer show  
Than purest wool, or whitest hills of snow.  
Most of her rank this holy book despise :  
Swine prize not pearls, nor these, heav'n's mysteries.  
Give them romances, wanton songs and plays,  
They throw the Bible by for holy days.  
But not so she. This kept her company  
In church, in closet, and in family.  
Believe not us : trust your own eyes, and see :  
Her own remarks the truth will testify.  
Revolve her Bible : scarce you'll find a place  
Which suits a poor afflicted sinner's case,  
But you'll perceive it has been sweet to her,  
And in her doubts and fears a comforter.  
These latent marks will set before your eyes  
The various turns of her soul-exercise :  
These threat'nings witness her soul-wounding fears,  
These penitential places, mark'd, her tears,  
Her griefs and sorrows of a godly kind,  
And deep distresses of a humbled mind.  
The precepts, mark'd, say that her gracious will  
His holy law was ready to fulfil.  
She had His statutes gravéd on her heart,  
And could not from His righteous way depart.  
But most of all, she mark'd the promises,  
Which were her chief support in soul-distress.

Upon God's gracious covenant she hung ;  
 Compar'd with Christ, all things were loss and dung  
 In her account : God's covenanted love,  
 And sweet communications from above,  
 Afforded her more comfort and content  
 Than all the gold and pearls of th' Orient.  
 Riches were only toys in her esteem,  
 The worldling's joys only a golden dream.  
 Eternal joy and glory was the prize,  
 And heav'n the goal, she set before her eyes.  
 She spurn'd beneath her feet this clod of earth,  
 And her ambition show'd her heavenly birth,  
 Which never spent itself in chase of fame,  
 Nor airy titles, and an empty name  
 Of worldly grandeur, dazzling vulgar eyes ;  
 But her ambition was, her Lord to please.  
 She liv'd at home, and carefully did scan  
 Her own soul's case : she watch'd her inner man.  
 Gentle to others, to herself severe,  
 Her neighbour's failings patiently could bear  
 And hide beneath love's mantle ; but no way  
 Would she indulge her own infirmity :  
 Not like the mad professors now-a-days,  
 Who love on others' falls to build their praise ;  
 Censorious ones, who like abroad to roam,  
 And seldom search into their hearts at home.  
 And yet, she was no Gallio ; still she car'd  
 What way her Mother Church, poor Zion, far'd.  
 Look through the Prophets, how she mark'd each place  
 Judiciously, which toucheth Zion's case.  
 With her poor Mother Zion she laments  
 Departed glory, broken Covenants ;  
 And yet, in stedfast hope of better days,  
 Herself upon the promises she stays.

The Godly Remnant's case lay near her heart ;  
 In all their wrestlings still she bore a part.  
 She lov'd and honour'd all, who in the least  
 Her Father's image in their lives expressed ;

But those that were most zealous in His cause,  
 And made most conscience to observe His laws,  
 She prizéd most : their mean obscurity  
 Could ne'er make her despise their company.  
 She chose her lot \* with these despiséd ones,  
 Whom she esteem'd the Church's truest sons ;  
 Which yet on her did no disgrace reflect,  
 But rather aggrandiz'd her just respect ;  
 For those that honour God shall honour'd be,  
 Whilst worldlings' glory turns to infamy.

It was her careful éndeavour, through grace,  
 Still to fill up the duty of her place.  
 In each relation, daughter, mother, wife,  
 She led a holy and a useful life.  
 She hated idleness and luxury,  
 Superfluous cost and prodigality,  
 Our gentry's pests, rank nurseries of vice,  
 Which grows apace to a prodigious size  
 In these our sinning days, the dregs of time,  
 And stains our land with every horrid crime.  
 She was a pattern of that golden age,  
 When virtue acted nobly on the stage,  
 And did obtain the plaudit of the great,  
 Till shameless, daring vice usurped the seat.  
 Whilst dainty dames mind nought, but how to please  
 And pamper their proud flesh with wanton ease,  
 This Lady, like a lamp or candle bright,  
 Which spends itself in giving others light,  
 Laid out herself, how she might best promote  
 The good of others, by a generous love.  
 Hence, though of all the world she sought it least,  
 She gain'd a just esteem in every breast—  
 At least, the good and wise, who have the sense  
 To put a value on true excellence.

\* Perhaps a reference to her marrying Macmillan, a deposed minister, and himself of no exalted birth or origin.—*Ed.*

Her children, whom she did with care instruct,  
 And by her own example did conduct  
 In paths of virtue and true piety,  
 Which lead to blessed immortality,  
 And bred in each genteel accomplishment,  
 Which might be to their lives an ornament,  
 These, in the deepest gratitude, do all  
 Arise, and with one voice her *Blessed* call.

But most of all, her husband speaks her praise :  
 His dumpish \* nights, his melancholy days,  
 His silent sobs, do vocally proclaim  
 How much he reck'néd her his diadem,  
 His joy, his comfort, and his sweet soláce,  
 His sympathizing friend in ev'ry case.  
 Oh ! had you seen, when she departed hence,  
 His manly virtue struggling 'gainst his sense,  
 With what hard conflict reason did control  
 The mutinying passions of his soul,  
 Which did assault his mind with mighty shock,  
 As raging billows dash against the rock,  
 Which, though awhile it seem all covered o'er,  
 Yet keeps its station stedfast as before ;  
 Though nature seem'd to yield, yet divine grace  
 Could calm these surging waves of grief apace.  
 Oh ! had you heard, when once his silence broke,  
 How he his spouse's commendation spoke :—

Might I complain (but God is *just* in all  
 The dispensations that His own befall :  
*Just*, did I say ? nay, He is also *good*,  
 (If Providence we rightly understood),  
 I might lament : But none my loss can rate,  
 Deprived of such a pleasant, loving mate,  
 My sweet companion, and my pious wife,  
 The comfort of my solitary life,  
 Whose chaste affection and well-grounded love,

\* See *supra*, p. 286.—*Ed.*

As it was ardent, so did constant prove :  
The partner of my sp'ritual joys and cares,  
Witness her frequent fasts and fervent pray'rs,  
The constant supplications she did make,  
Not only for her own, but for my sake :—  
That I might be kept stedfast in the way  
Of holiness and of pure verity :  
That I might be supported and upheld  
In that great work to which my Master call'd,  
And make the savour known in ev'ry place  
Of my Redeemer's love and boundless grace.  
The Gospel's success was her constant care,  
This she implor'd with many a fervent pray'r :  
She knock'd with holy importunity,  
Nor did her Lord her earnest suit deny.  
Some can, I hope, from sweet experience  
Tell how the Word was back'd with influence.  
And I can say it, to free grace's praise,  
That Sabbaths, since we met, prov'd pleasant days.  
Those preparation-times she weekly kept,  
Those watchful prayers and cries, whilst others slept,  
Return'd not empty, but, like Noah's dove,  
Sweet olive-boughs of peace brought from above.  
Though oft, along the week, she us'd to be  
Detain'd abed by sore infirmity,  
Yet on the Sabbath still she would arise,  
As soon as morning-beams did gild the skies :  
Which time she spent not, as most ladies use,  
In costly dressing, of their time profuse,  
But did with Mary Magdalen accord \*  
Betimes to seek a crucifiéd Lord.  
And hence she came the preachéd Word to hear  
With longing heart, and with attentive ear.  
The Word she counted her delicious food,  
In it her soul found satisfying good.  
Whilst many hearers only love the sound,  
To her, it did with life and sap abound.

\* A reference to her Christian name : compare epitaph.—*Ed.*



To see the Word despiséd was her grief,  
 Whether through prejudice or unbelief ;  
 To see the message kindly entertain'd  
 Afforded her content and joy of mind.

Ah ! when I call to mind those solemn days  
 Wherein we jointly used to pray and praise,  
 How, Jacob-like, she wept and wrestled so,  
 As not to let the Cov'nant-Angel go,  
 Till she attain'd the stedfast hope, that He  
 Would look upon His Church's misery,  
 And send His sinking Remnant such relief,  
 As would make joy succeed in place of grief,  
 The fainting spirits of His folk revive,  
 And cause poor Israël's dry bones to live,  
 When each disjointed bone shall come to bone,  
 And His poor people be unite in one :—  
 I can't but say, when this I call to mind,  
 That not poor I alone have lost a friend ;  
 The Church of Christ hath lost a pillar too :  
 No wonder, if the house begin to bow,  
 Whenas the strongest props are pull'd away,  
 As may be seen in this our dismal day.  
 Good cause have my poor flock of Balmaghie  
 To mourn their signal loss in losing thee !  
 And that smàll Remnant, scattered through the land,  
 To which I likewise in relation stand,\*  
 Have lost a wrestler at the throne of grace,  
 Who sympathiz'd with their afflicted case.

Ah ! when those pleasant hours to mind I call,  
 When we convers'd on things spiritual,  
 With what sagacity and lively sense,  
 With what sweet feeling and experience,  
 She us'd to talk of her Redeemer's love,  
 Th' eternal world, and unseen joys above ;  
 It rapt my mind into an ecstasy  
 Of mixéd joy and grief, to think of thee !

\* Macmillan had been pastor of the United Societies since 1706.—*Ed.*

Her dear idea to my mind presents  
 All Christian virtues and accomplishments :  
 Deep self-denial, and humility,  
 Sure badges of true Christianity :  
 A cheerful, patient bearing of the rod,  
 Though sharp and sore, as from the hand of God :  
 Great readiness to pardon injuries,  
 When wrong'd by proud, malicious enemies ;  
 (For seldom doth a dandled Joseph live  
 Without some archers, him to wound and grieve :)  
 Her trust in God, and humble confidence  
 Upon her heavenly Father's Providence,  
 For rich supplies, to furnish all her wants :  
 Her love to precious Christ, and to the saints :  
 Sweet resignation to her Maker's will,  
 And readiness to render good for ill ;  
 In short, all lovely graces she possessed,  
 No virtue was a stranger to her breast.

And as she liv'd a saint, so did she die  
 With sweet composure and serenity.  
 Full well she knew of her approaching death,  
 And was preparéd to resign her breath.  
 The Sabbath last, which she in time enjoy'd,  
 Though weak, in holy converse she employ'd.  
 Some \* select Scriptures first she caus'd be read,  
 Then, in a sweet composéd frame, she said :—  
 “ Oft have I in my house of pilgrimage,  
 When all the gates of hell did seem to rage  
 'Gainst my poor soul, when all my deadly foes,  
 The Dev'l, the World, the Flesh, against me rose,  
 When heav'n above my head did seem to frown  
 With wrathful storms, and floods me swallow down,  
 When Sinai's flashes from thick darkness broke,  
 And when law-threat'nings direful vengeance spoke :  
 Oft have I found my drooping sp'rits upheld,  
 And the Devourer's fiery darts repell'd,

\* viz., Psal. 25, and Revel. 1st, 2nd, 3rd chapters.

By those sweet Scriptures : these have oft reviv'd  
 My sinking soul, and from distress reliev'd.  
 And now, in death, I find these words of truth  
 More sweet by far than honey to my mouth.  
 Now to the Lamb, that lov'd and wash'd me  
 In His own precious blood, all glory be !  
 But oh ! who can describe that massy love,  
 Which brought Him from His glorious throne above ?  
 A shameful, painful, curs'd death to die  
 Upon the Cross ; and this for wretched me—  
 For me, a rebel, born an heir of wrath,  
 Justly obnoxious to eternal death !  
 When shall I join in endless harmony  
 With saints above, His love to magnify ?  
 The fight's near finish'd now : blest Jesus, come,  
 Give me my passport hence, and take me home ! ”  
 He heard from heav'n, and granted her request,  
 For Sabbath next prov'd her eternal rest.

How much she had the work of God at heart,  
 Ev'n when her soul was ready to depart,  
 Was evident in her farewell to me,  
 Expressed with tender love and sympathy :—  
 “ Farewell, my dear, since the divine decree  
 Forbids that I should longer dwell with thee :  
 Thy company to me was sweet indeed,  
 But now I go to mine exalted Head,  
 My best-belov'd Bridegroom, who's sweeter far  
 To me, than all created comforts are.  
 Farewell, my dear, be faithful to the end,  
 And Jesus Christ will prove thy trusty Friend.  
 Be stedfast in His cause and Covenant,  
 And thou support from heav'n shalt never want.  
 And now, my dear, heaven's blessing on thee rest—  
 I go to Christ, which is by far the best.”  
 She spoke ; and in a trice her longing soul  
 Broke through the cage, and flew beyond the Pole,  
 Where now 'midst heav'nly choristers she sings  
 Eternal praises to the King of kings.

The sprightly babe, which leap'd within her womb  
 Some hours before, now finds its bed a tomb.  
 And thus with double trial I'm assail'd,  
 Bereft of both my dearest spouse and child.\*  
 But since the Lord Himself hath order'd it,  
 I'll to His just and holy will submit ;  
 Nay, at the providence I dare not grieve,  
 Since I have solid reasons to believe,  
 That, as their dust doth undistinguish'd lie,  
 Their souls did pass to heav'n in company :  
 His faithful cov'nant-promise doth proceed,  
 Not only to believers, but their seed.  
 Guilty it was, as Adam's progeny,  
 But grace, even in the womb, can sanctify.

And now, since my best earthly comfort's gone,  
 The world to me is more distasteful grown.  
 I long to get above the fleeting world,  
 Where with incessant motion all is whirl'd.  
 I long to have my firm and sure abode,  
 And be a pillar fix'd in th' House of God,  
 That upper House, where light and glory dwells,  
 Where the least saint the radiant sun excels.  
 When shall I stand before His glorious throne,  
 And see that high-exalted Three in One ?  
 Whom seraphs with veil'd countenance adore,  
 And martyrs cast their crowns His feet before.  
 When shall I join with dear relations gone,  
 And tune my harp to laud the Highest One  
 Whilst dwelling in this vale of misery,  
 Discordant jars oft mar our harmony ;  
 But in that goodly glorious mount above,  
 Nought dwells but perfect peace and perfect love.  
 Thither my longing soul sometimes aspires,  
 But sluggish flesh anon damps my desires.  
 Oh, when shall I from this dull flesh be freed,  
 And drink fresh pleasures at the fountain-head ?  
 Time, make switt paces, waft me o'er the line,—  
 I nothing claim on this base earth as mine !

\* He had no children by his first marriage —*Ed.*

## ACROSTIC.

M ajestic mildness grac'd her countenance ;  
 A dmir'd endowments made her amiable,  
 R eligious really, not in pretence :  
 Y ielding to good, to ill uncounsellable.

G race rais'd her soul 'bove mean and vulgar aims,  
 O rder'd her steps in new obedience.  
 R enowned virtues were her brightest gems,  
 D evotion, join'd with frugal diligence.  
 O blivion's abyss shall not drown her fame ;  
 N or livid envy blast her balmy name.

## A LETTER TO A DYING FRIEND.

[From a MS. in the New College Library, Edinburgh.]

Octr. 26, 1741.

MY VERY DEARE FRIEND,

I am sorry you are not in a case to travel, but what else can you expect, considering your age and bodily infirmities? But a little more will bring you where you long to be, and then you will say, Farewell all troubles! But tho' then it will be well with you, yet the cause of Christ will lose a friend, and myself also. But tho' the godly may sinder for a little while, yet they will meet again. Christ the great and good shepherd will lose none of his flock. And that will be the heartsomest time that ever the people of God enjoyed, when they shall all meet about the throne, tuning aye the praises of their most lovely Redeemer. Up your heart then,\* for the day of your Redemption draweth near! This with our love to you. Send us word here, how you are, and if in any thing we can serve you.

J. McMILLAN.

\* *Sursum corda!*—Ed.

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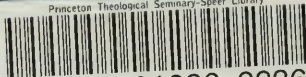








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